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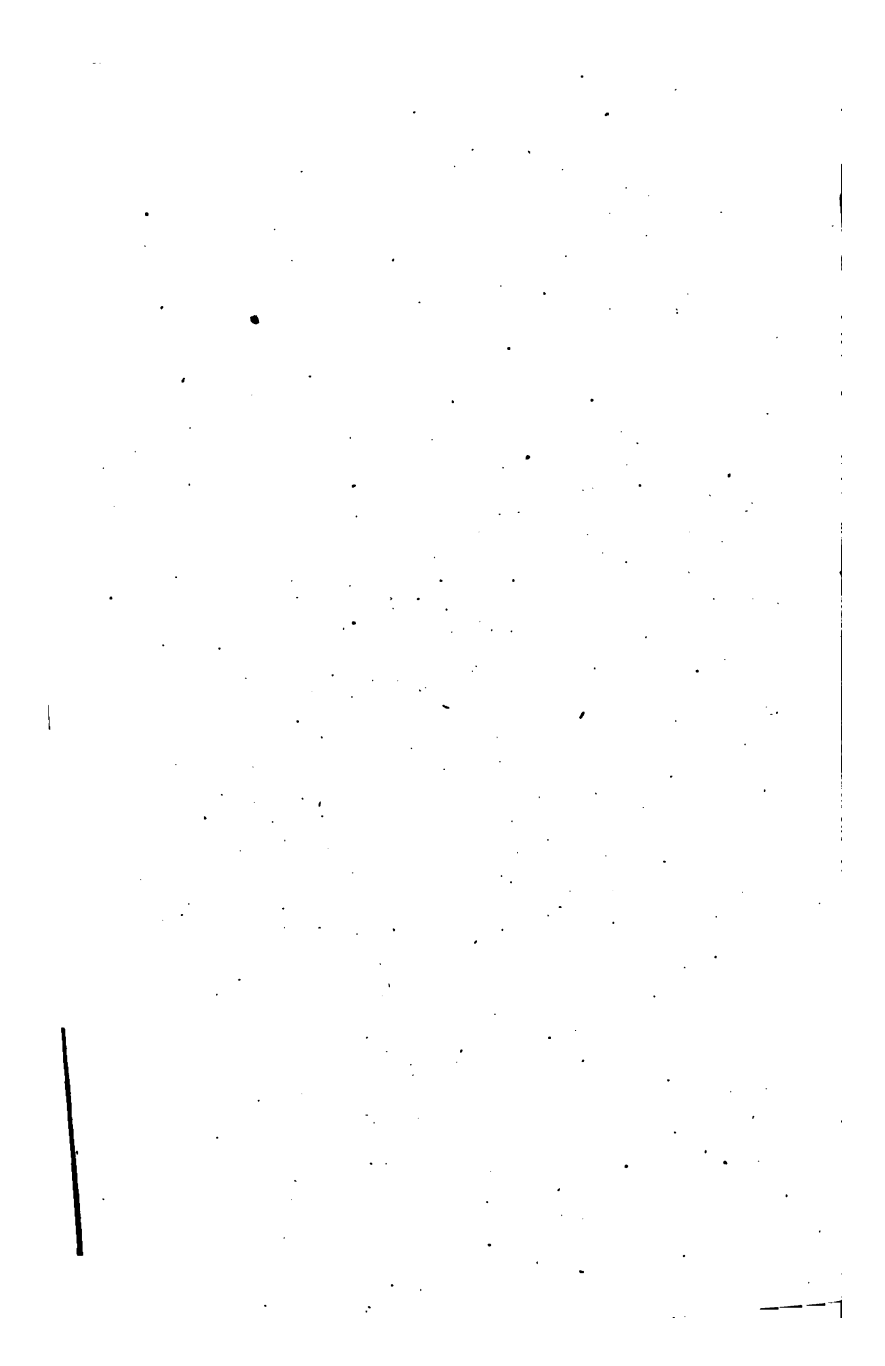
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CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES

AND

THE BIBLE.

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AND

THE BIBLE.

BEING

SERMONS

PREACHED IN ST. MARTIN'S CHURCH, LEICESTER.

WITH A PREFACE AND NOTES.

BY THE REV.

DAVID JAMES VAUGHAN, M.A.,

VICAR OF ST. MARTIN'S, LEICESTER, AND LATE FELLOW OF
TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

O send out thy light and thy truth; let them lead me; let them bring
me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacle.—PSALM xliii. 3.

Ζητούμεν δὲ τὴν ἀλήθειαν, ὑφ' ἧς οὐδεὶς πώποτε ἐβλάβη.
M. AURELIUS.

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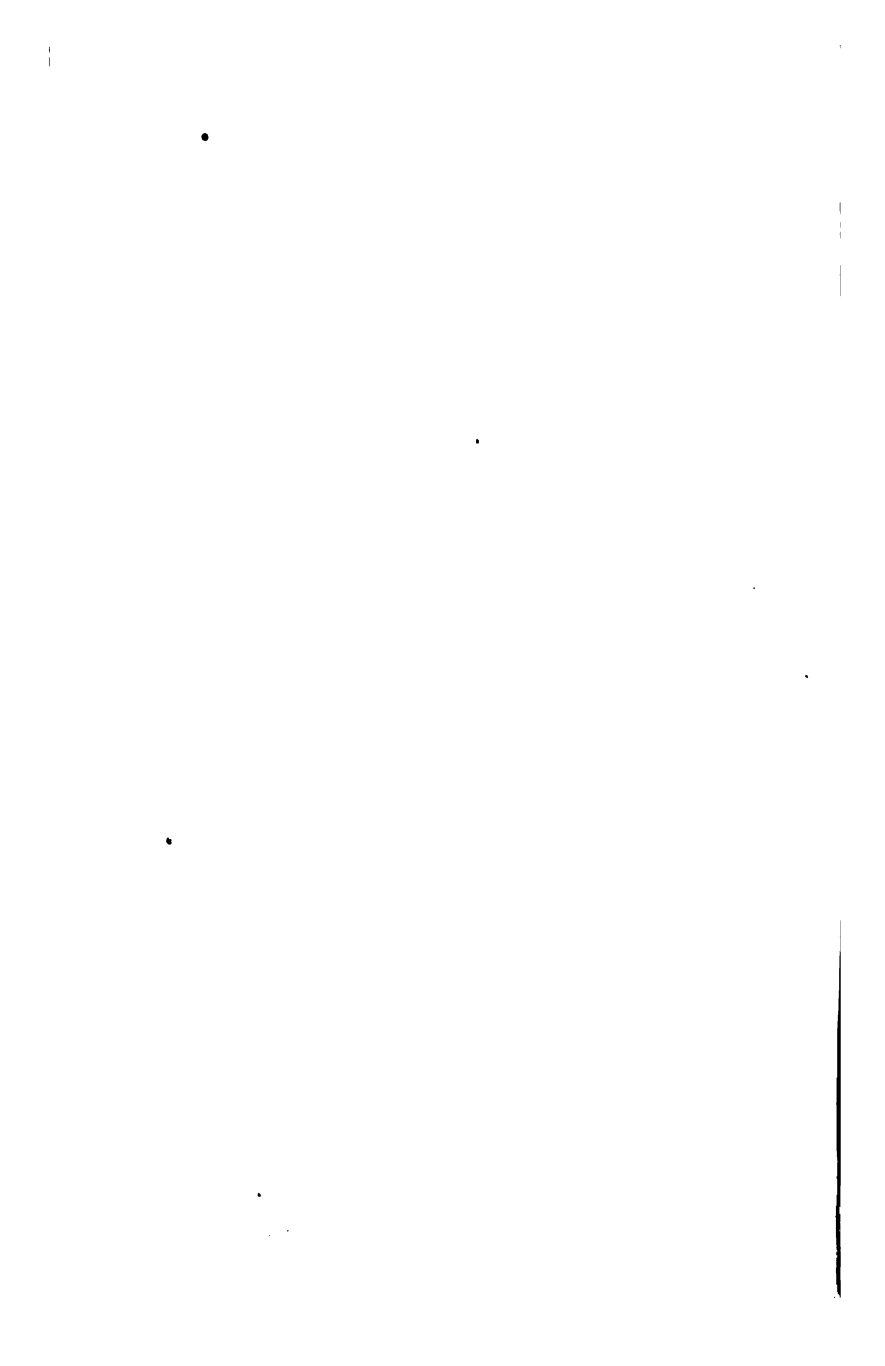


TO MY HONOURED FRIEND,

JOHN McLEOD CAMPBELL,

FORMERLY MINISTER OF BOW,

THIS LITTLE VOLUME IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED
IN GRATEFUL ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF MANY INVALUABLE
LESSONS LEARNED FROM HIS WORKS.



PREFACE.

I HAVE placed on the titlepage of this volume one of the noblest sayings that heathen thought ever gave birth to, and one of the devoutest prayers of a Jewish Psalmist. They seem to me to illustrate very strikingly the difference between the standing-ground of the two writers ; the former searching darkly yet earnestly after truth, the latter confident that there is One, in whom all truth is, and who is willing to reveal it.

It is just the difference between the heathen and the Jew,—between the standing-ground of Philosophy and that of Revelation. At last there came One, in whom the aspirations of the heathen and the anticipations of the Jew were to be satisfied ; One, who, from the first, had been stimulating those aspirations and giving substance

and confidence to those anticipations. His own account of his mission, at the bar of Pilate, was this;—"To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." And to his disciples, the night before He suffered, He said; "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

The main object of the following sermons is to show, that, quite irrespective of any theory as to the nature of the Bible and the special inspiration of its authors, there is good and sufficient reason for believing, that He who spoke thus is indeed the Son of God, who reveals the Father, and reconciles men to the Father. The first four of them were preached to audiences consisting chiefly of the working classes, at a series of special services held during the season of Advent, 1864. The remainder were preached in the ordinary course of parochial ministration, at various times in the course of the last three years. They are added, in a slightly altered form, in order to make the treatment of the subject of the fourth sermon somewhat more complete.

Several years ago I found myself unable to resist the conclusion, that it is impossible to build our Christian faith, as has so often been attempted of late, upon the assumed infallibility of the Bible as its foundation; and that the true and solid rock, upon which the Church really stands and ought consciously to stand, is simply the confession that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God."¹ Every succeeding year has only confirmed me in this conviction. Recent controversies have satisfied me more than ever of its truth; and, also, of the peace, satisfaction, and repose which may be found in the acceptance of it. I have endeavoured in the following volume to bring it out as clearly and forcibly as I could.

The controversies provoked by the publication of "Essays and Reviews" and "The Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua Critically Examined," have laid a heavy weight of responsibility upon the parochial clergy of the Church of England, which many of us must have felt very severely. On the one hand, it was our bounden duty to strive to profit ourselves, and to help our congregations to profit, by the peculiar and trying

¹ Matt. xvi. 16—18.

circumstances of the time ; and on the other hand, in the endeavour to give them such help as we could and were bound to give, there was danger of stirring up questions, which would minister rather to strife and doubt, than to "godly edifying which is in faith."¹ I trust that the following pages, written by one who has himself felt the burden of the special difficulties and responsibilities which the times impose upon us, may possibly be of some use to those who are suffering from that burden themselves.

I would fain hope that they may be of use also to those amongst the laity, who are as much disgusted by the reckless and unreasonable destructiveness of the Critical School represented by the Bishop of Natal, as by the equally unreasonable utterances of the advocates of the absolute infallibility of the Bible on every subject. *Practically*, I believe that the latter are much nearer to the truth than the former. But to erect that which should be matter of Christian experience, finding by daily trial the life and power of the scriptures, into a speculative dogma, and to make it the basis of our faith, is a most

¹ 1 Tim. i. 4.

dangerous proceeding, and can only issue, as we see it now issuing, in a plentiful harvest of scepticism and unbelief.

But the cloud which threatens to settle upon the faith of many at the present day, will disperse, if we will but be true to ourselves and to the guidance which God in many ways is offering to us. The law, "Bear ye one another's burdens," is accompanied, as St. Paul shews,¹ by another law which completes it, "Every one shall bear his own burden." Each generation, in turn, must bear its own burden, and must not attempt to throw it off upon the shoulders either of its predecessors or its successors. But each, in turn, may receive help from those which have preceded it, and may also, if it will do its own part manfully, give help to those which follow it. The burden of our own generation is in many respects a new and a special one; but even for us there are wise counsels in the words of learned and pious men of an older time, which might have been written for ourselves. "Though all scripture," writes Richard Baxter in that work of his, which has become a very handbook of devotion

¹ Gal. vi. 2, 5.

amongst us, “be of Divine authority, yet he that believeth but some one book, which containeth the substance of the doctrine of salvation, may be saved; much more they that have doubted but of some particular books. They that take the scripture to be but the writings of godly honest men, and so to be only a means of making known Christ, having a gradual precedency to the writings of other godly men, and do believe in Christ upon those strong grounds which are drawn from his doctrine, miracles, &c., rather than upon the testimony of the writing, as being purely infallible and divine, may yet have a divine and saving faith. Much more those that believe the whole writing to be of Divine inspiration, where it handleth the substance, but doubt whether God infallibly guided them in every circumstance. And yet more, those that believe that the Spirit did guide the writers to truth, both in substance and circumstance, but doubt whether He guided them in orthography; or whether their pens were as perfectly guided as their minds. And yet more may those have saving faith, who only doubt whether Providence infallibly guided any tran-

scribers or printers, so as to retain any copy that perfectly agreeth with the autograph."¹

To these wise words of the pious and learned Baxter I will add some, which express, as faithfully as the words of another man can do, my own strong conviction. "This I believe," writes Coleridge,² "by my own dear experience—that the more tranquilly an inquirer takes up the Bible, as he would any other body of ancient writings, the livelier and steadier will be his impressions of its superiority to all other books, till at length all other books and all other knowledge will be valuable in his eyes in proportion as they help him to a better understanding of his Bible. Difficulty after difficulty has been overcome from the time that I began to study the Scriptures with free and unboding spirit, under the conviction that my faith in the Incarnate Word and his Gospel was secure, whatever the result might be; the difficulties that still remain being so few and insignificant in my own estimation, that I have less personal interest in the

¹ "The Saints' Everlasting Rest." Part II. chap. iii. The whole of the original passage is unfortunately omitted, I believe, in the ordinary editions of the Saints' Rest.

² "Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit," p. 90.

question than many of those who will most dogmatically condemn me for presuming to make a question of it."

It is pleasant to record one's obligations to those, from whom one feels that one has learned much. In all that concerns Physical Science, its facts and its logic,—to which reference is repeatedly made in the following pages,—I have to acknowledge my deep obligations to M. Comte's "*Cours de Philosophie Positive*," Mr. J. S. Mill's "*System of Logic*," and Dr. Whewell's "*History*" and "*Philosophy of the Inductive Sciences*."¹ To Mr. Campbell and Mr. Maurice my debt of gratitude is of a different and more vital kind. Their writings² have, again and again, thrown a flood of light upon the Scriptures,—enabling me

¹ In saying this, I must not be understood as wishing to shelter myself under the authority of great names. The eminent writers, to whom I have referred, are not agreed amongst themselves on many most important points; and a student of their works, writing from a different point of view, and with a very different purpose, will sometimes have to follow one rather than another, and will often be unable to gain more than the most general help from any.

² I refer more particularly to Mr. Campbell's work on "*The Nature of the Atonement*," his "*Thoughts on Revelation*," and his "*Fragments of Truth*;" and to Mr. Maurice's "*Prophets and Kings of the Old Testament*," "*The Doctrine of Sacrifice*," and "*The Gospel of St. John*."

to read their meaning aright, and to *feel* their force and their life. No words can express the gratitude that is due to those, who have thus helped to take the veil from the face of the Bible and to make it a living book to one. Critical researches may be necessary in their place and way; but they have a terrible tendency to distil the life and soul out of the Scriptures, and to make them a sealed and barren book to the reader. We want something, which historical criticism can never give us; and which only men of genuine spiritual insight, like those to whom I here record my obligation, can help us to find. The same truths which stirred the hearts of men in the first century, are the truths which our own hearts still cry out for in this nineteenth century. They lie in the pages of our bibles, but often obscured by a thick curtain of tradition, which needs to be drawn aside, ere we can realise what is really there. Much indeed has changed, since the Bible was written; but the spiritual constitution of man remains the same, and the spiritual wants of man remain the same, and that Gospel which was "the power of God unto salvation" eighteen centuries ago, is the power of God unto salvation

now. It is, in truth, that "everlasting gospel," which shall yet be preached, "not in word only, but in power," to "every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people."¹

A busy professional life makes it hard to deal, as one would wish, with subjects so deep and wide as those which are discussed in the following pages. I shall be grateful to those who will point out any errors into which I may have fallen, or who will use the thoughts which I may have suggested to them, in a more powerful and efficacious way, for the glory of God and the advancement of his kingdom in the hearts of men.

¹ Rev. xiv. 6.

ST. MARTIN'S VICARAGE, LEICESTER,

April, 1865.

PREFACE

TO THE SECOND EDITION.

ANALYSIS OF THE NATURE OF SCIENTIFIC PROOF.

IN the course of the following volume repeated reference is made to physical science, its methods and its doctrines. In preparing this Second Edition for the press, it has occurred to me that it would add much to the completeness, and I trust also to the usefulness of the work, were I to prefix to it some discussion of the nature of the evidence, which, in the wide field of fixed and certain knowledge, is universally held to be sound and conclusive. Such a discussion will correspond to the two-fold purpose contemplated in this volume. It will put us in possession of a definite standard of comparison; and will thus be the means of showing how solid and weighty are those Christian evidences, which it is the great object of the following sermons to set in array. It will also enable us to form a true estimate of the logical value of that historical criticism, which, in its application to the earliest writings of the Old Testament, has made its voice heard so loudly of late amongst us; and will thus aid us in answering the question,—What is the Bible?

Several years ago I became convinced, that the evidence which satisfies us, and is held conclusive, in matters of science, is closely akin to the evidence which may be adduced, and should be held conclusive, in matters of religion; that, so far from it being the case that there is any real fundamental opposition between science and religion, reason and faith, there is no possible opposition between their *doctrines*, rightly understood, and there is a very real similarity between their *methods*. The profoundly interesting events which have recently transpired in the theological world, compelled me to have recourse again to some studies, which once had a great attraction for me. I have become more than ever convinced, both of the harmonies to which I have just referred, and of the necessity of cultivating a thoroughly scientific temper of mind, as one of the best antidotes to our two greatest present dangers;—the *scepticism* which doubts needlessly and irrationally, and the *dogmatism* which asserts recklessly and without sufficient proof. I believe that the vast development both of science itself and of the practical applications of science, which has taken place in the last fifty years, is due to the good providence of God, and has an important bearing upon the religious wants and dangers of our own time. It is, therefore, I conceive, a special duty of theologians to study its nature, and to learn what it has to teach us.

The question to which I wish to find as distinct and definite an answer as possible, is this:—“What is the nature of that proof, which, in matters of science, is held to be conclusive? Upon what kind of grounds, and in virtue of what

kind of evidence, do we accept the truths of science as certain, believe them, and act upon them?"

Now, here we must distinguish two cases; the case of the scientific man, and the case of the non-scientific man; the case of the man who can follow out the evidence for himself, and the case of the man who cannot do so. The real importance of the inquiry belongs to the former case. But the latter is deserving of some attention. Why do we accept any doctrine of science as true, without going through, and without being able to go through, the evidence for it? Why, for example, do we believe the law of gravitation, as a law which holds good, without exception, at any rate within the limits of our solar system; the law, namely, that every particle of matter attracts every other particle with a force which varies inversely as the square of the distance? We believe it simply *on the authority of others*; the authority of scientific books, or of scientific persons, telling us that it is so, and indicating, perhaps, in some extremely popular way the steps by which the discovery of the law was made. As we never hear the fact contradicted by any competent person; as there is no balancing of authorities; and as we believe that the subject has been thoroughly discussed, and that if the received result were disputable, we should hear of its being disputed; we never think of doubting it: we accept it with unquestioning confidence. But it is a confidence derived entirely from authority, and not from any genuine appreciation of the real evidence. In a country, where opinion is free, and where the press is free, and where conse-

quently we are sure that we shall hear the other side of a question, if it has another side, such confidence is perfectly rational, perfectly legitimate. But it is right that we should understand its nature, as being conviction derived, not from evidence, but from authority. We may perhaps rebel against the thought that by far the greater part of our knowledge is of this nature; but it is so nevertheless.

Midway between the case of the non-scientific and the scientific man, there stands another case, to which a moment's attention must be given, before we pass on. It is that of the learner, who is prosecuting some scientific study, and is beginning to appreciate the evidence of its truths for himself. Such a person will,—to a certain extent, more or less, according to the stage of advancement at which he stands,—be able to follow and understand the proofs for the statements which he receives. But to a certain extent, also, less or more, as the case may be, he will be unable to do so. The proper attitude of his mind under such circumstances is *candour*,—a rare and most precious quality, indeed. To keep the mind open to conviction, without being prematurely convinced,—to defer to lawful authority, without allowing one's own rightful liberty to be circumscribed and hampered by it,—to recognize frankly the higher light that there is in others, and its claims upon us, and yet to refuse to be led blindly by it, and to profess to see what one does not really see;—this is no easy matter. And yet this is the only sound and true attitude of the mind, in relation to all those things,—and, to the last, how many they are!—in which we are learners.

We come now to the real subject of our inquiry,—the case of the scientific man, and the nature of the proof, which he, as a man of science, holds to be conclusive. And here we must proceed very cautiously, and with a real understanding of the terms which we employ. Otherwise our conclusions may be quite false and worthless. We must endeavour, too, as far as may be, to embrace and exhaust the whole field of our inquiry. Otherwise, our conclusions, without being positively false, may be imperfect and dangerously defective.

We are speaking, then, of *science*. And by science we are to understand all that knowledge, which is exact and systematic. There are three processes by which such knowledge is acquired,—observation, induction, deduction; and knowledge is *exact*, in proportion as these processes are legitimately applied and correctly performed. It is *systematic*, in proportion as the natural divisions of the general field of science are followed, and natural groups formed; and in proportion as, within each division or group, the logical order of the subject is faithfully exhibited.

We may separate the field of science, first of all, into two great divisions,—according as we study things themselves, or the abstract properties of things.¹ For example, the things around us are capable, of course, of being numbered. We abstract this property of number, study it by

¹ "The broadest natural division amongst the sciences," writes Mr. Herbert Spencer (*Classification of the Sciences*, p. 4), "is the division between those which deal with the abstract relations under which phenomena are presented to us, and those which deal with the phenomena themselves."

itself without any further reference to the things numbered, and so get the science of arithmetic. Again, the things around us occupy space. We abstract this property, study it by itself, and so get the science of geometry. Still pursuing this process of abstraction, and substituting symbols for figures and lines, we obtain in the science of algebra the most general properties of number and space. Again, everything which occupies space, is also a manifestation of force, in the form either of motion, or of tendency to motion. We abstract this property of *force*, study it by itself, and so get our science of mechanics; statical or dynamical, according as the result of the action of force is rest or motion.

On the other hand, instead of studying the abstract properties of things, we may study the things themselves. For example, we may observe the heavenly bodies, their movements and the various phenomena or appearances which they present; and thus we get the science of astronomy. Or we may study the material things around us, organic and inorganic, examining their electrical, chemical, and vital qualities, and so getting the sciences of electricity, chemistry, and physiology. The fundamental difference between this and the preceding division of the field of science, which makes the division a natural and not an arbitrary division, is this;—that, whereas in the former we abstract the properties and study them by themselves without any further reference to the things of which they are the properties, in the latter we study the properties in the things, keeping ourselves always in the closest and most direct communication with the things themselves,

by means of *observation*, either natural or artificial ; that is, by means of *observation* commonly so called, where we simply watch that which nature herself offers to our notice, as, for example, in astronomy ; or by means of *experiment*, where we interrogate nature on our own account and through arrangements of our own, as, for example, in chemistry. To the first of these two great divisions we give the name of mathematics ; to the second the name of physical science.

Again, with regard to physical science, we may study the things around us,—that is to say, the things which can be brought in any way within the cognizance of our senses,—either with the view of discovering their constant properties and the permanent laws and causes of the phenomena which they present ; or with the view of determining, from their actual condition now, what was their condition in some past time, and the steps and causes by which they have been brought into their present state. Take, for example, the phenomena presented by the heavenly bodies. We may study the solar system, either with the view of determining the real movements of the bodies of which it is composed, and the laws and causes of those movements ; or with the view of determining, from the present appearances of the system, what its condition was in times long anterior to the present, and how it came into that state in which it now is. To discover the present, and to infer from the present what the past was, are clearly two very different things. It will be best to reserve the name of physical science for the former, and to give to the latter the name of

palætiological (the name adopted by Dr. Whewell), or archæological, or antiquarian science.

We have thus divided the general field of science into three natural divisions,—mathematical, physical, antiquarian. We shall find this division exceedingly helpful in the prosecution of our inquiry into the nature of scientific proof.

1. We will begin with mathematical science. The peculiarity of this division is, that, commencing from a very small number of primary or elementary data, called definitions and axioms, it proceeds, entirely by trains of deductive reasoning, to establish a large body of profound and complex truths. The elementary data being true, and the reasoning being correct, *the result is certain*. Mathematical proof is *demonstration*. The result is so certain, that the contrary of it is not only improbable, but inconceivable and impossible. It cannot be other than what it is.

But, as I have just said, the reasoning must be sound, and the elementary data true; otherwise the whole process becomes vicious, and the result necessarily false, or, at the most, only accidentally true; as, for example, when a sum in arithmetic is wrongly worked, but, the mistakes happening to compensate one another, the answer chances to be right. The reasoning process, after the first elementary data are obtained, is always deductive, never inductive. In other words, it is always capable of being thrown into a syllogistic form. Other sciences advance themselves by an almost impartial use now of induction and now of deduction. It is the peculiarity of mathematical science, as soon as its first principles are obtained, to employ deduction only.

The general difference between induction and deduction may be stated thus. By induction we collect a general law from a number of particular cases. By deduction we bring a particular case under a general law. It was by a process of inductive reasoning,—from the consideration of the phenomena presented by falling bodies, terrestrial gravity, and planetary movement,—that Sir Isaac Newton collected the law of universal gravitation. But it was by processes of deductive reasoning that he applied the law to the solution of the difficulties presented by the perturbations of the moon's orbit and the orbits of the planets, and showed that those perturbations could be accounted for by it. He collected the general law by induction:—he applied it, and brought particular cases within it, by deduction.

The validity of any process of deductive reasoning may always be tested by its being thrown into the form of a syllogism, or series of syllogisms. There is, therefore, no inherent difficulty in the way of testing the truth of a process of mathematical reasoning. If there is a flaw or fallacy in it, it can be detected and exposed. But how is the truth of the elementary data themselves to be tested? And whence are they derived?

The answer to this last question has been much disputed. But I think it seems clear that they are derived from experience, by processes of abstraction and induction. For example, in geometry, we get our definitions by a process of abstraction, and our axioms by a process of induction. The first two definitions in Euclid are these;—"A point is that which hath no parts,

or which hath no magnitude:" and, "A line is length without breadth." There is no such thing really as a mathematical point, or a mathematical line. We put aside, or suppress, the *magnitude* of the point, and the *thickness* of the line, in the outset of our inquiries, and so proceed with our investigations. Were we to take them into the account, they would prove an unnecessarily and most inconveniently disturbing element. Again, the tenth axiom prefixed to the first book of Euclid is,—“Two straight lines cannot inclose a space:” and this may be regarded, either as a truth derived from experience, an induction of the simplest kind; or as a deduction from the definition of a straight line, as “that which lies evenly between its extreme points.”

That the elementary data, or axioms, of mathematical science are truths derived from experience, becomes more and more manifest, as we proceed from those branches of the science which deal only with number and space, to those which deal with force and motion. For example, no progress could be made in that part of the science of mechanics which is called dynamics, without recognizing the truth of the principle or axiom, known as the first law of motion, and expressed thus:—“A body under the action of no external force will remain at rest, or move uniformly in a straight line.” So far from being a self-evident proposition, the truth thus stated was long in being discovered. As soon as it *was* discovered, it not only became the foundation of the mathematical science of dynamics, but also made it possible to construct a right theory of the movements of the heavenly bodies. For it was at

once seen that those movements might be resolved into two; one in the line of the tangent to the curve actually described, and the other in the line of the radius, deflecting the body at every instant from the tangent, and causing it to describe a curve, which, in the case of the planets and their satellites, was further found to be that particular section of the cone, which is known as the ellipse. The movement in the line of the tangent was at once accounted for, under the first law of motion, by the original impulsive force, whatever it may have been, which set the planets in their courses thousands or millions of years ago. It was the glory of Newton to discover that the continuous force, which at every moment deflects the heavenly bodies from the tangent, is identical with that force, which is known on the earth's surface as gravity; which causes the phenomena of weight, and which makes the stone fall and the balloon ascend.

The first law of motion is, therefore, a truth not of mathematical, but of physical science, and the consideration of the evidence for it and similar truths belongs to the latter, not to the former. In mathematical science it stands as an axiom; a foundation of reasoning, not a conclusion from it. The analysis of the nature of such evidence must be reserved, until we come to the second compartment of the general field of science.

One other point remains to be noticed, before we pass to that second compartment. Mathematical reasoning, in the form of the higher geometry and algebra, admits of being largely applied, and has been largely applied, to the various branches of physical science. It is in

this way, for example, that astronomy has made its greatest advances. The sciences of electricity, and light, and heat, have benefitted greatly by a similar application of mathematical formulæ and mathematical reasoning. But there is a limit to such an application; and there is a point at which it becomes deceptive. In order to effect the application at all, it is often necessary to disembarass the question of preliminary difficulties by making suppositions, which are not strictly in accordance with the facts. The reasoning which follows being correctly performed, the result is certain. But unless the result be tested by experiment, its seeming certainty may be very fallacious, owing to the incorrectness of the original suppositions on which it was founded. Physical science may thus, at almost every step, furnish extremely interesting mathematical problems, requiring for their solution the highest skill, ingenuity, and artifice. But there is a point, at which the solution of them ceases to be any real help, and offers only the semblance of help, to the physical inquirer. That point is attained as soon as the incorrectness of the suppositions from which the reasoning starts, overbalances the gain derived from the certainty of the reasoning itself.

To bring this part of the subject to a conclusion. To the question,—“What is the nature of scientific proof, within the sphere of mathematics?”—we reply;—“The data being true and the reasoning being correct, the proof is *certain*. The evidence is not *probable*, but *demonstrative*. But the character of the *data* varies through every degree of certainty and uncertainty, as we pass from the science which deals simply with num-

bers, to those applications of mathematical processes, about which I have just spoken. Arithmetic and algebra alone employ no data, on which a shadow of suspicion can fall. The points and lines and surfaces with which geometry deals, have no existence in nature. The axioms of mechanics are inductive truths, the quality of whose evidence has yet to be considered. The hypotheses, which applied mathematics introduce in order to facilitate the investigation, are frequently not only not founded in fact, but a wide departure from fact. The certainty of each department of mathematical science is exactly as the certainty of the data of each. The conclusions, however correctly worked out, must be uncertain, if the premisses are uncertain. If the data are certain,—that is, *if they are conformed to the actual truth of things*,—the conclusions are equally certain. They are, in the language of philosophy, *necessary truths*; that is, truths which cannot be other than what they are.”

2. We proceed now to the second of the three great divisions of the entire field of science, in which the inquirer studies the properties of things, not apart from the things, but in the things themselves; and *that*, in order to ascertain the present or to predict the future, not to surmise the past. Its characteristic mark is, that it always keeps itself in direct communication with *things*, by means of observation and experiment. It is both deductive and inductive. But its differentia is, that it is, in the widest sense of the word, *experimental*.

It is necessary to form a clear idea of the extent and the contents of this division, before

we can discuss its materials profitably, with a view to answering the question which is the subject of our inquiry. The best classification with which I am acquainted, is that proposed by the great and voluminous French writer on Positive Philosophy, Auguste Comte.¹ The principle upon which his classification proceeds, is the dependence of the sciences upon one another, arising out of the dependence of the phenomena with which each respectively has to do.² Thus, the phenomena with which astronomy

¹ The germ of this classification may be traced in Plato's Republic. See Book VII. pp. 522—530.

² The dissertation upon the nature of scientific proof, contained in this preface, was mainly written in the autumn of 1863, before the publication of Mr. Herbert Spencer's Essay upon the Classification of the Sciences. Mr. Spencer's first great division of the general field of science into abstract and concrete corresponds with my own. In the re-division of the field of concrete or physical science, I have gone on quite a different principle from that upon which his classification proceeds. I have divided it into physical and palætiological, while he divides it into abstract-concrete and concrete. As a classification of the sciences in their mutual relations, I should not think of putting my own distribution of them into competition with his; the question of *classification* being quite secondary and subsidiary, so far as my present purpose is concerned. But for the special object which I had in view,—namely, to *bring out as clearly as possible the nature of that evidence, which in the field of our most certain knowledge is universally held to be satisfactory and conclusive*,—I venture to think that my classification is both a natural one, and the best.

Comte's Classification, errs, I think, in several respects, though the general principles of it seem to me sound and good; namely, that we must begin with the most simple and general phenomena, and so advance step by step to the most complex and particular, and that each science must depend upon all those which precede it in the series, both in respect of method and of doctrine, and must be independent of all that follow it. It errs, for example, in its co-ordination of mathematics with physical science, and in its contemptuous treatment of political

deals, profoundly affect the surface of the earth and all that belongs to it. Similarly, the chemical properties of bodies have a great effect in modifying the phenomena of life; and all, together, astronomical phenomena, chemical phenomena, vital phenomena, tend to make the position of man in *society* what it is. Following this principle, without adhering strictly to the details of M. Comte's classification, we get five large groups, comprising many minor subdivisions. These large groups, arranged in their natural order, are *astronomy*; *physics*, including the sciences of weight and heat and sound and light and electricity; *chemistry*, both inorganic and organic; *physiology*, including botany, zoology, and comparative anatomy; and *social science*, or *sociology*, including political economy, logic,¹ psychology, ethology, and perhaps others.

These *hints* (for they are no more) of a possible classification will be enough for our present purpose; that is, enough to show how wide, and of what immense importance, is the field, with which we are now concerned. Now, as to the materials

economy (Cours de Philosophie Positive, vol. iv. pp. 264—280), and psychology (Ibid. vol. i. pp. 35—38; vol. iii. pp. 769—794). Both these sciences may be placed very fitly as departments under the general head of sociology;—the former, for obvious reasons; the latter, because it is only in society, and through society, that man becomes what he is.

¹ The formal syllogistic logic underlies every process of reasoning and belongs as much to one part of science as to another. Its proper place is at the head of all the sciences. But the inductive logic with its methods and subsidiary processes can only then be perfected, when the sciences themselves have attained to something like perfection. And this can only be in society and after a prolonged civilization. This great branch of logic, therefore, must be ranged under the general head of sociology.

of this vast field, it is necessary that we should understand that they may be reduced to three heads; namely, *simple facts*, *inferred facts*, *general laws*. The nature of the scientific proof must be carefully sought under each head.

i. The great bulk of every science, included within our present division, consists of simple facts, which may be either the result of direct observation or the fruit of experiment. Every science must begin by collecting such facts. The *proof* of them consists in the frequent repetition of the observation or the experiment, from which they were at first derived, until all reasonable doubt as to their reality is removed. When there are, as there are at present, a vast number of inquirers in every department of physical science, the experiments and observations of one are so repeated and checked by others, and errors and incorrectnesses are so sure to be almost immediately detected and exposed, that, after a while, they are accepted by men of science as practically certain, and are made the data for further investigation.

The evidence for such facts is simply the evidence of the senses. The senses may be most materially aided and strengthened, may be rendered more searching and acute, by the use of instruments. In some sciences this is the case to a remarkable extent. In astronomy, for example, the telescope, the chronometer, and the various instruments and appliances for observing and measuring, have made the astronomer's work far more exact and reliable than it could otherwise be. But, after all, it is the human eye that must read the result; and the evidence for any

and for every observed fact must, in the last resort, be the evidence of the senses.

"Probable evidence," writes Butler in the opening sentence of his great work, "is essentially distinguished from demonstrative by this, that it admits of degrees; and of all variety of them, from the highest moral certainty, to the very lowest presumption." We have already learned from the first division of our subject, what demonstrative evidence is. The evidence of the senses is not demonstrative. Not to speak now of the perplexities raised by the inquiry, at once physical and metaphysical,—"*What is sensation?*"—not to speak of the difficulties involved in the passage from *thoughts* to *things*, from the mental modification of the sentient being to that which causes such modification;—not to speak of these things, which have tasked the powers of the profoundest thinkers from the first dawn of philosophy down to the present time, and are still almost as far from a decided solution as ever: it is enough to advert to the fact, that our senses may, and frequently do, deceive us. Even in the most careful observations, made with the most perfect instruments, there is an element of uncertainty and of error,¹ which can indeed be

¹ Even in astronomy, with all its perfection of instrumental appliance, observation cannot be made absolutely perfect.—"There is one correction, upon which I said there was a little doubt, and that is that troublesome thing, refraction. It is one of those things which throws a doubt upon every observation of a delicate kind." (Airy's *Lectures on Astronomy*, p. 155.) "There is also in most cases another cause of uncertainty; it is that of which I have spoken so frequently, refraction, which is such a trouble to astronomers. Nearly every observation which we make upon the position of the stars

removed, for all practical purposes, by repeating the observations over and over again, and taking the mean value of all, but which is still there. The evidence for the simple facts of science is still of the nature of probable evidence only; though, in any particular case, the presumption may be, and repeatedly is, of such an enormous and overwhelming kind, as to amount to what Butler calls "moral certainty."

The exercise of the senses in the way of observation is by no means the easy matter which we are apt to imagine. The very different accounts which different people will give of one and the same transaction, of which they have all alike been eye and ear witnesses,—afford a familiar illustration of the difficulty of observing correctly. I have already referred to the *instrumental* appliances by which the observations upon which physical science is built up, are made more true and exact, and of which the telescope and the microscope are well known examples.

is affected by refraction, and after making all proper allowance, we cannot always answer for the results." (Ibid. p. 170.)

A curious instance of the possibility of error even in the most elaborate astronomical calculations, founded upon the most careful observations, is presented by the problem of the distance of the earth from the sun. The mean distance, as calculated from observations of the transit of Venus in 1769, is given as 95,300,000 miles. Of this calculation the Astronomer Royal says :—"By this method the distance of the sun from the earth has been successfully determined without leaving any sensible doubt on the accuracy of the result." (Airy's *Lectures on Astronomy*, fourth edition, p. 126.) "We have reason to think that the actual error scarcely exceeds this,"—namely, one five-hundredth part of the whole distance :—"and certainly the error is not one of half a million of miles." (Ibid p. 139.) The error is now believed to be one of three or four millions of miles.

Another of the aids and appliances of scientific observation is scientific *nomenclature* and scientific *language*. If we open, for example, a treatise on botany, we find, not only *names*, such as calyx, corolla, stamens, pistil; but also descriptive *terms*, such as *serrate*, *crenate*, *dentate*, and the like. The object of the introduction of such terms and names is to record and to communicate observations. These terms and names are in botany, something like what the mural circle and the transit instrument are in astronomy,—the means of making our observations more precise and correct. In brief, scientific language is an auxiliary of *observation*; just as scientific classification is an auxiliary of *induction*.

ii. We pass from the consideration of these simple facts and the proof of them, to the consideration of the next head in our division of the materials of physical science, namely, *facts inferred*. The peculiarity of this second class of facts is, that they are arrived at, in the first instance, by a process of reasoning; and that they seldom, if ever,—and, at the most, only partially,—admit of direct observation.

Two examples will suffice to make the peculiar character of these inferred facts sufficiently intelligible. Everybody has heard of the discovery of the circulation of the blood, and most English people know that the discovery was made by an Englishman named Harvey. The following is Dr. Whewell's account of the discovery.

“William Harvey was born in 1578, at Folkestone, in Kent. He first studied at Cambridge: he afterwards went to Padua, where the celebrity of Fabricius of Acquapendente attracted from all

parts those who wished to be instructed in anatomy and physiology. In this city, excited by the discovery of the valves of the veins, which his master had recently made, and reflecting on the direction of the valves which are at the entrance of the veins into the heart, and at the exit of the arteries from it, he conceived the idea of making experiments, in order to determine what is the course of the blood in its vessels. He found that when he tied up veins in various animals, they swelled below the ligature, or in the part furthest from the heart; while arteries, with a like ligature, swelled on the side next the heart. Combining these facts with the direction of the valves, he came to the conclusion that the blood is impelled by the left side of the heart in the arteries to the extremities, and thence returns by the veins into the right side of the heart. He showed, too, how this was confirmed by the phenomena of the pulse, and by the results of opening the vessels. He proved, also, that the circulation of the lungs is a continuation of the larger circulation; and thus the whole doctrine of the double circulation was established."¹

There can be no reasonable doubt that the blood *does* circulate in the manner described. It is what we call a "*fact*." But it is a fact *inferred* from a number of simple facts,—not itself capable of direct observation. The simple facts from which it was inferred, such as the phenomena of the pulse and of ligatures and the existence of the valves, *were* capable of direct observation:—but the actual circulation of the blood could not be

¹ Hist. of the Ind. Sci., Book xvii. chap. ii. § 2.

observed; at least, not in the human subject, and only very partially in any other. It is not that the fact is, by itself and from its very own nature, one of which the senses could not possibly take cognizance. It is literally *veiled* from our eyes; and we have to infer it from that which is not so veiled.

We have taken this first example from physiology. We will take the second from astronomy. Kepler's "first law," as it is commonly called, is,—that the planets move in elliptical orbits, each having the sun's centre in one of the foci of the ellipse. This, again, like the circulation of the blood, is not, properly speaking, a *law*, but an inferred *fact*.

The history of the discovery of such a fact is always full of interest. In this particular instance, it is spread over a very great number of years, beginning with the observations of the old Greek astronomers, of whom Hipparchus and Ptolemy are the most famous, and reaching down to the year 1600 A.D., when Kepler joined Tycho Brahe at Prague, and commenced those researches into the motions of the planet Mars, which led to his great discoveries.

The Greek astronomers contrived to represent the movements of the heavenly bodies as observed by them, in a manner extremely ingenious and exhibiting great powers of geometrical reasoning. Regarding the earth as the centre of the system, they supposed that the sun and moon and planets revolved in the circumference of circles, whose centres described other circles round the earth. It is not easy to ascertain, whether they regarded these circular movements as real movements, or

whether they conceived of them as simply the best and most convenient way of *representing* the apparent movements of the heavenly bodies. Professor Whewell, himself an admirable geometer, speaks in high praise of the theory, and regards it as having a permanent value.¹ Be this as it may, such supposed movements could only be regarded as real movements, so long as the distances of the sun and moon and planets from the earth and from one another were unknown. As soon as the improvement of astronomical instruments rendered more exact measurements of these distances possible, the epicyclical theory became utterly untenable as a theory of the real, not the apparent, movements of the heavenly bodies. Copernicus, who was professor of mathematics at Rome in the year 1500 A.D., and who followed the great Hipparchus at an interval of between 1600 and 1700 years,—saw that the planetary movements might be far more simply represented by regarding the sun as the centre of the system, and supposing the earth and the planets to revolve in circles round it. It was reserved for Kepler to show that these orbits are not circular, but elliptical or oval. And this he did by showing, first in the case of the planet Mars, and then in that of the other planets, that the elliptical form of the orbit represents most accurately the positions of the planets in relation to the sun, as observed and noted down through a long series of years.

It is not very difficult to understand the

¹ "As a system of *calculation*," he writes (Hist. of Ind. Sci., vol. I., p. 196) "it is not only good, but in many cases no better has yet been discovered."

process by which this result was arrived at. A number of positions of the planet Mars in relation to the sun having been carefully observed, the question arose,—“What is that curve which will pass through all these points, and be the *locus* or assemblage of them?” It so happened that the orbit of Mars offered peculiar facilities to the investigation, owing to the fact that its eccentricity is greater than that of the other planets then known. Kepler tried a great many curves, before he hit upon the one which satisfied all the conditions of the problem. The answer which he gave at last, was;—“The curve described by the planet is that section of the cone, which is known as the ellipse;”—a curve, many of the properties of which were known even to the Greek geometers. The discovery once made, the next step was to verify it. This was done by constructing tables to show the future positions of the planet, as they should be according to the theory; and by comparing these theoretical positions year after year with the observed positions of the planet. The theoretical positions and the observed positions were found to agree so accurately, as to leave no doubt of the truth of the theory. It was then extended by further observations to the other planets of the solar system; and thus it became an established fact of science, that the planets do move in elliptical orbits, having the sun in one of the foci.

It will easily be seen that this discovery belongs to precisely the same class, as the discovery of the circulation of the blood. It is a fact, not itself capable of direct observation, but *inferred* from a number of simple facts, which

are capable of direct observation; and, also, *verified* by the prevision of a number of simple facts, also capable of direct observation.

In the particular case of this discovery of Kepler, the evidence for its truth was greatly strengthened, when Newton showed that, on the principles, of mechanics, if there be an attractive force in the sun whose intensity varies inversely as the square of the distance of the bodies attracted, those bodies will revolve in elliptical orbits, having the sun in one of the foci; and when he further identified this force with terrestrial gravity. Such a *consilience*, or jumping-together, of inductions,—to use Professor Whewell's expressive phrase,—is a very remarkable feature in physical science, and is felt to have a strong corroborative force. But in general, and where there is no such consilience or corroborative evidence, the nature of the scientific proof for such inferred facts is of the following kind;—Given any number of observed facts, to see what further fact is implied in them; which, being discovered, will, exclusively, either represent or explain them. The force of the proof depends, partly upon the completeness of the representation or the explanation, and partly upon the absolute exclusion of any other rival hypothesis. And this, which constitutes the verification of a scientific theory, is accomplished by putting it to the trial of actual use. Will it account for, will it represent, will it enable us to predict, *new* facts,—that is, facts not included in the original data? If so, then the inference is, that the theory is true,—a true statement of the case. And as time goes on, and brings no

evidence of an opposite kind, the inference grows in certainty, until at last the theory ceases to be any longer on its trial, and is accepted as a fact. But, to the very last, the evidence is of the nature of *probable* evidence, not demonstrative. Nay, often, these inferred facts are only approximately true; though the approximation may be so close as to suffice for all practical purposes. It is so even with this discovery, with which we have been last engaged. The mutual attractions of the planets disturb the symmetry of their orbits and prevent them from being perfect ellipses. Were all perturbations removed, the orbits would be symmetrical. As it is, they are not so. But the deviations are so slight, that in general they may be neglected; and these deviations are themselves in accordance with that higher law of gravitation, which accounts for the elliptical nature of the orbits.¹

iii. We divided the materials of the whole vast field of physical science into three heads,—simple

¹ This kind of scientific proof occurs, over and over again, in a practical and less precise shape, in our courts of law, in the form of what is called "*circumstantial evidence*." The question which a jury has frequently to answer, is of this kind;—"Given a number of facts proved, more or less certainly, in evidence,—will the supposition that the prisoner at the bar committed the offence for which he is on his trial, account for those facts or not? Will that supposition *alone* account for them?" Unless these two questions can be answered, without reasonable doubt, in the affirmative, the prisoner is entitled to a verdict of "not guilty."—System of Logic, Book III. chap. 1, § 2.

It might be doubted, whether such cases of circumstantial evidence belong more properly to physical, or to palætiological science. (System of Logic, Book III. chap. xiv. § 7.) But the truth is, that the inquiries, into which circumstantial evidence enters, are so proximate in point of time, that the supposition of unknown causes, or of known causes acting with an unknown degree of intensity, has no rational place in them.

facts, inferred facts, general laws. It is to this third division that we must now address ourselves.

I have endeavoured, in every part of this analysis, to follow natural divisions, not to create arbitrary ones. I believe that I am still following a natural division, when I draw a distinction between inductive *facts* and inductive *laws*.¹ It seems to me, that there is a very real difference between those

¹ The meaning and the sphere of *law* are examined at the close of the present volume. But something must be said here as to the meaning of the word *fact*.

We often mean by it only what is *true*. We say,—“It is a fact”; only meaning, “It is true.” In this sense, every proved law of nature, however general, is a fact. But, speaking more accurately, a fact is that which is self-contained, and can be *isolated*, and, either directly or indirectly, *observed*. It is not itself *law*, but *the manifestation of law*. Again, a law cannot be conceived, and has no real existence, apart from the facts in which it is manifested; but facts are separable from law and from one another. Again, every real phenomenon is a fact; but every fact is not a phenomenon.

Both inferred facts and general laws are alike *theories*, until they have been thoroughly established and completely verified.

As the facts, with which physical science has to do, may be either simple or inferred; so they may be, also, either particular and single, or general and plural. That the shape of the earth is an oblate spheroid, is a particular, inferred fact. That the shape of the planet Jupiter is ellipsoidal, is a particular, simple fact. That the orbit of the planet Mars is an ellipse, is, in like manner, a particular, inferred fact. That the orbits of the planets and their satellites are elliptical, is a general, inferred fact. That the escarpments of the geological strata of England are turned towards the west and north-west (*Hist. of the Ind. Sci.*, Book xviii. chap. ii. § 1), is a general simple fact,—not inferred, but directly observed.

The distinction which I have drawn between inferred facts and general laws, is quite unimportant, so far as the main object of the present inquiry is concerned. For the rules of evidence and the conditions of scientific proof are the same for both.

The facts with which science has to do, are always either continuous and permanent, or capable of easy repetition under similar conditions. In common life, the facts with which we have to do in the way of judgment and action, are, most often,

scientific truths, of which, from their essential nature, our senses can take no direct cognizance whatever, except in their effects,—and those, which, not from their own essential nature, but from accident as it were, do not admit of being directly observed. Even such a truth as the elliptical nature of the planetary orbits may be brought under this latter head. For we may say of it, as our great writer on *Logio* says¹:—"If the planet left behind it in space a visible track, and if the observer were in a fixed position at such a distance above the plane of the orbit as would enable him to see the whole of it at once, he would see it to be an ellipse; and, if gifted with appropriate instruments and powers of locomotion, he could prove it to be such by measuring its different dimensions. These things are indeed impossible to us, but not impossible in themselves: if they were so, Kepler's law could not be true."

There is unquestionably much in common between the second and the third divisions of physical science,—between inferred facts and general laws. There is no essential distinction between the *processes* by which the two classes of truths are obtained. In either case, the process is inductive. In either case, from certain observed or accepted facts we derive a higher truth, whether law or fact, which represents, or explains, or accounts for them. In either case, the methods of verification are similar. But there is this great difference; that, in the case of general laws, we have to do with that, which is

disconnected, fragmentary, and incapable of repetition, because the same assemblage of conditions cannot, or does not, recur.

¹ System of Logic, Book III. chap. ii. § 4.

essentially invisible and intangible, and whose effects only are visible and tangible. Thus, in the case of the law of gravitation, the mutual attraction of the particles of matter is by its very nature invisible and intangible. Its *effects* only, in the form of weight and motion, are capable of being observed and measured.

At this point, therefore, we are brought very close to the invisible and spiritual world. We are on the border ground between the two worlds of matter and of spirit. It is this which appears to me to give to this part of our subject such an amazing interest. It will be well to illustrate it by one or two examples.

I have referred more than once to the law of gravitation. Stated in the most general way, it is this:—"Every particle of matter attracts every other particle with a force which varies inversely as the square of the distance." The law, therefore, both asserts the existence of this attractive force, and assigns the measure of it. By the hypothesis of such a force, so measured, all the movements of the heavenly bodies can be satisfactorily explained, and accounted for, and predicted. There is nothing known, that contradicts it. There is everything in favour of it. Its identification with terrestrial gravity brings it home, as it were, to us. But the force itself, whose effects we thus measure, and whose existence we thus prove, is in itself essentially invisible, intangible, mysterious. *Science* drives us out of materialism; just as *faith* does.

Take, again, the first law of motion:—"A body under the action of no external force will remain at rest, or more uniformly in a straight line."

"As to the *proof* of this law," writes Dr. Goodwin,¹ "we may obtain some hint of its truth by observing, that the more nearly we make the circumstances of a body agree with those supposed, the more nearly is the law verified. For instance, according to the law, the diminution of the velocity of a body moving along a dead level ought to be wholly due to friction; and we do in fact find that the more we guard against friction the longer the body will continue in motion; and on a railway, where the friction is very much diminished, the distance to which a train will proceed after the steam has been turned off, is very great indeed. Other examples will suggest themselves to the student, or perhaps he may think the law so simple as not to require illustration. He must remember, however, that the want of a clear perception of its truth was for a long time a bar to progress in dynamical science, because men, misled by terrestrial phenomena, considered it necessary to inquire what force was necessary to keep a body in a certain uniform state of motion. A satisfactory proof of the truth of this, as well as of other laws which we shall meet with hereafter, arises from the fact of the accurate agreement with fact of calculations, many and complicated, which are based upon it. Perhaps, however, the mind, which has dwelt long on the subject, will see the truth of the law as necessarily involved in the idea of matter, and as having therefore an axiomatic character more convincing than any proof founded upon the agreement of calculation and experiment."

¹ "Elementary Course of Mathematics," p. 220.

We may dismiss the first and the last of these three sets of considerations; the first as being obviously insufficient to establish the law, the last as being in the way of proof highly deceptive. For it is not difficult for the mind to dwell so long on a subject, that at last *that* seems axiomatic and necessary, which is really only inferred and accidental. The real evidence for the law resides in the fact, that, *assuming it to be true*, we can at once proceed to resolve and account for the planetary movements, and other kindred phenomena. The peculiarity of the law is, that it describes a *tendency*, which, in point of fact, is never realized. In the case of the heavenly bodies, for example, the motion in the tangent which would result from it, is at every moment counteracted by the attractive force of the sun. We may perhaps, compare it, in this respect, to a law drawn from a very different field of scientific investigation,—the law of rent in political economy. The true theory of rent is, that it is the difference between the cost of cultivation on the best lands and the cost of cultivation on the poorest lands which the necessities of demand bring into the market. Not that rent ever is actually this; but to this it ever tends, and this is the true rationale of it, however much it may be overlaid and disguised by counteracting influences.¹

I need hardly point out that we are still entirely within the sphere of probable evidence. In this third division of the materials of the field of physical science, the degrees of certainty in the evidence are perhaps more clearly marked, than

¹ See Mr. J. S. Mill's Principles of Political Economy, Book II. chap. xvi. § 4.

in the other two. I have mentioned three laws, which are amongst the most certain; the law of gravitation, the first law of motion, the law of rent. We will pass on to a fourth, the undulatory theory of light; the theory, namely, that light is propagated by what are called *undulations*, or vibrations, of quite an infinitesimal magnitude, in a highly elastic medium. I speak with hesitation on this subject; for I find it exceedingly hard to realize either the existence of such a medium,¹ or the nature of these supposed undulations. There seems to be no doubt that all the curious phenomena of light, such as reflection, refraction, double refraction, polarization, dipolarization, can be *represented*, at least, if not *accounted for, and explained*, by this theory, and by no other,—at least with equal facility and completeness.² But in degree of certainty, it stands undoubtedly at a lower level than the law of gravitation.

I will close this part of the subject with one additional illustration, in order to show still more clearly the varying degrees of certainty, which may be traced in the evidence, with which we here have to do. I take it from the law known as the metamorphosis of plants in Botany.

“Before I state the history of this principle,” writes Dr. Whewell³ “I may be allowed to en-

¹ The hypothesis of such a “luminiferous ether” must, according to Comte and Mill, be regarded with great suspicion. System of Logic, Book III., chap. xiv., § 6. Cours de Philosophie Positive, vol. II. pp. 639—642.

² Hist. of the Ind. Sci. Book IX. chap. xi. § 5. Comte is wrong in saying that the phenomena of light can be equally well explained by the Newtonian, as by the undulatory theory. —Cours de Philosophie Positive, Vol. II., pp. 641, 642.

³ Hist. of the Ind. Sci., Book XVII., chap. vi., § 1.

deavour to communicate to the reader, to whom this subject is new, some conception of the principle itself. This will not be difficult, if he will imagine to himself a flower, for instance, a common wild rose, or the blossom of an apple tree, as consisting of a series of parts, disposed in *whorls*, placed over one another on an *axis*. The lowest whorl is the calyx with its five sepals; above this is the corolla with its five petals; above this are a multitude of stamens, which may be considered as separate whorls of five each, often repeated; above these is a whorl composed of the ovaries, or what become the seed vessels in the fruit, which are five united together in the apple, but indefinite in number and separate in the rose. Now the morphological view is this; that the members of each of these whorls are in their nature identical, and the same as if they were whorls of ordinary leaves, brought together by shortening their common axis, and modified in form by the successive elaboration of their nutriment. Further, according to this view, a whorl of leaves itself is to be considered as identical with several detached leaves dispersed spirally along the axis, and brought together, because the axis is shortened. Thus all the parts of a plant are, or at least represent, the successive metamorphoses of the same elementary member. The root-leaves thus pass into the common leaves; these into the bractæ; these into the sepals; these into the petals; these into the stamens with their anthers; these into the ovaries with their styles and stigmas; these ultimately become the fruit; and thus we are finally led to the seed of a new plant."

The conception of this law is due to the great

German poet, Goethe. In relation to the subject of our present inquiry, the question that arises is,—"What is the amount of reality that we are to attribute to it, and what is the nature of its scientific proof?" To me it seems that it cannot be regarded in any other light than that of a highly convenient theory for representing and comparing the facts; a "very useful contrivance," as Professor Lindley says,¹ "for the purpose of representing the abstract condition of a flower, without reference to form or colour or texture; and also for comparing one kind of structure with another." Yet the discoverer himself, Professor Whewell tells us, "repelled, with extreme repugnance, the notion that he had substituted fancy for fact, or imposed ideal laws on actual things. While he was earnestly pursuing his morphological speculations, he attempted to impress them upon Schiller. 'I expounded to him, in as lively a manner as possible, the metamorphosis of plants, drawing on paper, with many characteristic strokes, a symbolic plant before his eyes. He heard me,' says Goethe, 'with much interest and distinct comprehension; but when I had done, he shook his head, and said, 'That is

¹ School Botany, p. 17.

² Mr. Mill seems to attribute a greater degree of certainty to the theory, than this. "It seems," he writes (*System of Logic*, Book III. chap. xvi. § 7), "to be now considered by natural philosophers as sufficiently established, that plants and animals, in the process of growing up from their germs, have a tendency to develop themselves in a much more uniform manner than they in fact do; that the differences, for example, of leaf, flower, and fruit, are mere modifications of one general phenomenon; or (which is only another expression for the same idea) joint results of one common tendency and of several partial causes combining with it."

not experience; that is an idea.' I stopt with some degree of irritation; for the point which separated us was marked most luminously by this expression."

When we pass from the consideration of the law of gravitation, to that of the undulatory theory of light; and from this, again, to the metamorphosis of plants; we cannot help being struck by the very different degrees of certainty, of which these highest generalizations of science are susceptible. All alike belong to a region, of which by its very nature the senses can take no cognizance. It is purely rational, intellectual, spiritual. The evidence for the reality of its laws lies simply in their power of combining, representing, explaining, and predicting facts, which can be brought, either directly or indirectly, within the reach of our senses. It is *probable* evidence only, not *demonstrative*.

And these highest generalizations, upon which to some minds the great interest of physical science hangs, are remarkable in another point of view. They illustrate very strikingly two fundamental characteristics, two innate tendencies, of the human mind. One is the necessity which impels us to reduce the things around us to a few central unities. The other is the necessity which impels us to view the things around us in the relation of cause and effect. To bring many things under *one* head, and that head, if possible, a *cause*,—this is the great aim of physical science, and a fundamental law of human nature. The existence of such a law points, in no dim or obscure manner, to the existence of a great First Cause, who is One. The evidence for His exist-

ence,—regarded in this aspect alone, without looking further and deeper,—is of the very same nature with the evidence for the highest laws of physical science. To deny His existence is just as irrational as to deny the law of universal gravitation. Scepticism, in its purely barren and negative form, is not impossible in physical science; but it is felt at once to be foolish and misplaced there. It may seem paradoxical to say, that faith has a place in science; but so it is: just as reason has a place in religion. Faith and reason are not to be parcelled out and allotted, the one to religion, the other to science. They belong, each in its place, to both.

We may sum up the results of our inquiry into this second great field of knowledge under the following heads.

i. The proof of a general law is of precisely the same kind as the proof of an inferred fact. The difference between them lies, not in any difference between the nature of the proof of which each is susceptible, but in the difference between the things themselves; that is, in the difference between *fact* and *law*.

ii. The difference between simple facts and inferred facts is, that the former are capable of being directly observed; the latter, not. The difference between inferred facts and general laws is, that the former are incapable of being directly observed, *only from circumstances*; the latter, *from their own inherent nature*, as being essentially spiritual and mysterious.

iii. The proof, whether of general law or of inferred fact, varies in certainty according to the degree in which the three following elements enter into it:—

(a) The *multiplicity*,¹ and, more particularly in the case of general laws, the *variety* of the explained facts. Under this head falls what Dr. Whewell so fitly calls the *consilience* of inductions.²

(b) The completeness and thoroughness of the *explanation*, which the inferred law or fact furnishes for the facts of a lower order, whether themselves simple or inferred, which require explanation.

(c) The rigour and positiveness with which every other conceivable explanation is excluded. Until this *verification* is accomplished, the proposed explanation is a theory only; a way of looking at the facts, but not necessarily *the* way in which they must be looked at.

3. We pass on to the consideration of the third and last division of the general field of science, to which we give the name of archæological or antiquarian. This third division is very closely connected with the second. Its peculiarity is, that it endeavours from the present to reconstruct the past.

To this division belong all cosmogonical theories, such as the famous one of Laplace,

¹ At the same time it must be understood, that, alike in constructing and in verifying a theory, some facts are much more *crucial* and decisive, than others. It is the business of the observer or the experimentalist to bring any proposed theory, whether fact or law, at the earliest possible moment, to the test of such crucial, or decisive, simple facts.

² The discovery, that the same theory which accounts for one *set* of facts, will account also for another and a different set, is very impressive at the moment of the discovery, and may sometimes carry in consequence more weight than it really deserves. Ultimately it resolves itself into a case of variety, as well as multiplicity, of explained facts.

commonly known as the nebular hypothesis; and also sciences of such large extent as geology, historical criticism, and all that is commonly known by the name of archæology.

“Such palætiological speculations,” writes Dr. Whewell,¹ “are not confined to the world of inert matter; we have examples of them in inquiries concerning the monuments of the art and labour of distant ages; in examinations into the origin and early progress of states and cities, customs and languages; as well as in researches concerning the causes and formations of mountains and rocks, the imbedding of fossils in strata, and their elevation from the bottom of the ocean. All these speculations are connected by this bond,—that they endeavour to ascend to a past state of things, by the aid of the evidence of the present. In asserting with Cuvier, that ‘The geologist is an antiquary of a new order,’ we do not mark a fanciful and superficial resemblance of employment merely, but a real and philosophical connection of the principles of investigation.”

It will be seen at once, how numerous are the points of contact between geology, for example, and physical science properly so called. Mineralogy, which is a department of chemistry; zoology and conchology, which are departments of physiology; belong also to geology. It is only when we pass from the simple facts capable of direct observation, to facts of the second order, or, as we have already called them, *inferred facts*, that we discern the real logical distinction between physical science, on the one hand, and archæological science, on the other. The question which

¹ Hist. of the Ind. Sci., Book xviii. Introduction.

the former proposes to itself is always,—“What *is*?” and, “What *will be*?” The question which the latter proposes is,—“What *was*?”—and, “What *has been*?” Again, in physical science, knowledge tends to *foresight*, and foresight to *action*. But in archæological science, there is no foresight, and no action. The eye is turned backwards, not forwards; and the result contemplated is not action, but speculation.

It needs no words to point out the connection between cosmogony and astronomy;—and, again, between historical criticism and archæology (commonly so called) on one side, and that which in physical science we have called sociology, on the other. With many points of contact between them, and with much that is common in their materials, there is a fundamental difference in the nature of the questions which they propose to themselves to answer;—according as those questions concern the present and the future, *or* the past; and according as they aim at ascertaining the present, in order to predict and act in the future, *or* at reconstructing the past. And out of this fundamental difference there grows a very real difference in the nature of the scientific proof, of which the two divisions are susceptible.

In comparing this third division of the great field of science with the second, the thing that strikes one at once is its great inferiority in point of scientific elevation, precision, and certainty. In the first place, it contains no general laws:¹

¹ The “general laws in geology,” of which Dr. Whewell speaks (*Hist. of the Ind. Sci.*, Book xviii. chap. iv.), are not general laws in the sense in which I am using that expression, but are only *general, simple facts*. And such facts are not

indeed, from the very nature of the case, it does not admit of any. For general laws are the permanent statute-book of nature; and, as such, they fall wholly under the cognizance of pure physical science, and not of that palætiological science, whose office it is solely to reconstruct a past state of things. In the second place, its inferred facts are, for the most part, dubious and tentative,—hardly having more than a presumption, seldom very strong, in their favour. In the third place, even its simple elementary facts stand at a great disadvantage, as compared with the simple facts of physical science, owing to the difficulties which present themselves in the way of multiplying and correcting observations. It does not admit of experiment proper.¹ The verification of its inductions is, on that and other accounts, all but

inferred facts,—much less *general laws*, properly so called,—but are only collections or groups of simple facts. There is nothing in them, beyond what there is in the simple facts. They are, in no sense, *inductive*. They only suggest further inquiry, and the possibility of arriving at some inferred fact, which may account for and explain them.

The examples of such “general laws in geology” cited by Dr. Whewell, are the phenomena of anticlinal lines, of cleavage, of geological equivalents, of isothermal lines, of the parallelism of mountain ranges of the same apparent age, of the distribution of fossil fish. All these are, so far as I can see, only the summing up of large and suggestive groups of simple facts, capable of direct observation.

¹ Possibly, in the case of geology, some method of experiment *by analogy* may be devised, as a means of giving greater precision and certainty to its conclusions. But such experiments, however, skilfully made, must ever proceed on the *assumption*, that the forces, now in operation in the present, are the only forces that have ever operated in the past, and that they have operated always with the same intensity. Even from such a precarious mode of experimenting as this, historical criticism is necessarily precluded.

impossible. They cannot be brought, like the inductions of the preceding division, to the direct test either of observation or of experiment. They have to wait for the *chance* of the discovery of new facts,¹ which may *tend* either to confirm or disprove them, but which can never establish them wholly beyond the reach of doubt. Hence they can never pass beyond the rank of *theories*, tentatively held. They cannot rise to the dignity of facts.

Further, we have to remark, that this third division, unlike the second, is characterized by a remarkable leaning upon authority. The accumulation of its facts is out of all proportion to the stability of its theories. To master the immense multiplicity of facts which belong to a single department of this great field of knowledge, would require almost a lifetime of patient labour; and the expertness and familiarity with the facts, thence derived, give a weight of authority to the dicta of those who have mastered them, which has nothing equal to it in the still larger field of physical science.² The "expert" in coins, for example, will pronounce by the sense of touch upon the genuineness and antiquity of a specimen presented to him. From such a decision there is no appeal, except to the possibly contradictory dictum of some rival professor of the same science. This leaning upon authority appears to

¹ For an interesting example, in the case of historical criticism, see Niebuhr's *History of Rome*, vol. i. pp. 242, 243.

² The most advanced edge of every physical science does indeed run out into a region, in which authority is temporarily paramount; but the tendency ever is to absorb this exceptional region into the domain of fixed and positive truth.

be an inherent and radical weakness of all antiquarian science. For the present, at least, there seems to be no escape from it. And so long as this is the case, and in proportion as this is the case, the region of mere *opinion* is not quitted, nor the realm of true *science* reached.

"The history of physical geology," writes Dr. Whewell,¹ "considered as the advance towards a science as real and stable as those which we have already treated of (and this is the form in which we ought to trace it), hitherto consists of few steps. We hardly know whether the progress is begun. The history of physical astronomy almost commences with Newton, and few persons will venture to assert that the Newton of geology has yet appeared." I should almost venture to add, that, from the very nature of the case, a Newton of geology cannot appear.

Some amount of illustration will help to set these points in a clearer light. Let us take the nebular hypothesis of Laplace. The problem is to reconstruct the past history of the solar system, and to fix the steps by which it came into the condition in which it now is. Laplace's theory is that the matter, of which the sun and the planets are composed, existed once in a gaseous state of

¹ Hist. of the Ind. Sci., Book xviii., chap. vii. § 1. Edition of 1847. Similarly (Phil. of the Ind. Sci., Book x. chap. ii., § 17; Edition of 1847,) he writes; "I have ventured in my history to designate the most prominent of the theories which have hitherto prevailed, as *premature* geological theories; and we shall soon see that geological theory has not advanced beyond a few conjectures, and that its cultivators are at present mainly occupied with a controversy in which the two extreme hypotheses which first offer themselves to men's minds, are opposed to each other."

intense heat, diffused beyond the orbit of the most distant planet;—that it received a motion of rotation around its axis;—that as it cooled and contracted, it threw off rings of gaseous matter, which formed the planets;—these again, in some cases, throwing off other rings, which formed the satellites;—that this process of cooling and condensation was carried on until the central mass had shrunk into that nucleus of heat and light which we call the sun,—the portions from time to time thrown off, revolving round it in orbits and periodic times, which, according to Kepler's third law, bear a fixed relation to one another. Such a theory will account, we are told, on the known principles of mechanics,¹ for the general phenomena of the solar system. It is certainly, therefore, tenable as a *theory*;—that is, as a way of looking at the facts. But when we ask for the *verification* of the theory, none is forthcoming.² In physical science, as we have

¹ The satellites of Uranus, however, are a great stumbling-block in the way of the mathematical evidence for the theory. "The orbits of all these six satellites differ in two material particulars from those of every other body in the solar system. They are nearly at right angles to the plane of the ecliptic; and their motions are retrograde, or from east to west." Penny Cyclopædia; article, *Uranus*.

² "The sagest and most enlightened astronomers have not failed to acknowledge, that to verify or to disprove this conjecture, must be the work of many ages of observation and thought."—Phil. of the Ind. Sci., Book x., chap. ii. § 5.

"Quoique ainsi restreintes à un sujet bien circonscrit, dont toutes les circonstances caractéristiques sont parfaitement connues, les théories cosmogoniques n'en restent pas moins, par leur nature, essentiellement conjecturales, quelque plausibles qu'elles puissent devenir." Cours de Philosophie Positive, vol. II. p. 367.

"The theory therefore is, as I have said, of a similar character to the theories of geologists; though I am far from

seen, it is the *verification* that is the important thing. It is that, which elevates an induction from the rank of a mere theory or hypothesis to that of an established fact or law. In the case of the nebular hypothesis, no such verification seems possible. It would be some slight step towards a verification, could we discern a similar process to that conceived by the theory, going on in any other quarter of the heavens. Even that slight step cannot be securely taken. As the power of our telescopes has been increased, many of the actual *nebulæ* which can be observed in the heavens, have been resolved into groups of stars. It has been surmised, that all *nebulæ* would be ultimately resolved in the same way;¹ and though this surmise is now generally abandoned by astronomers, and though the phenomena presented by true *nebulæ* are of the most extraordinary and varied kind,² yet amid all this

comparing it with them in point of certainty. Even if it were proved (which it is not) that the conditions necessary for determining the breaking off of successive rings, would certainly occur; there would still be a much greater chance of error in assuming that the existing laws of nature are the same which existed at the origin of the solar system, than in merely presuming (with geologists) that those laws have lasted through a few revolutions and transformations of a single one among the bodies of which that system is composed." *System of Logic*, Book III. chap. xiv. § 7.

¹ "The large number of *nebulæ* which, seen with ordinary instruments, resembled patches of light, and which Herschel had resolved into stars by the aid of his telescopes of ten, twenty, and forty feet, conducted that great astronomer to a bold generalization. During several years he maintained that all *nebulæ* are clusters of stars; that there exists no more essential difference between *nebulæ* the most dissimilar in appearance, than a greater or less distance, a greater or less condensation, of the component stars."—Arago's *Popular Astronomy*, Book XI. chap. iii.

² See Arago's *Popular Astronomy*, Book XI.

variety there seems to be nothing that lends any definite support to the requirements of the theory.

The preceding example has been taken from cosmogonical or palætiological astronomy. We will take a second from geology. One of the most certain of the inferred facts of geology is the action of glaciers in localities from which they have long since passed away. In many countries the "ice-tool" may still be seen at work,¹—rounding, scoring, and polishing the rocks; and when similar effects are found elsewhere,—when weathered heights are traced above, and rocks scratched and smoothed below,—the natural and legitimate inference² is, that such effects were produced by the action of some extinct glacier. Carefully analysed, the proof amounts to *this*;—the effects could certainly have been produced by such a cause; *we* know of no other cause that could have produced them; whence we infer, that this, and no other cause, did produce them. It will be seen that the exclusion of all other causes,—a most important element in the verification of the theory,—is imperfect. It rests upon the assumption that our knowledge embraces all possible causes, past and present.

A more interesting, but much more complicated geological problem is presented by the

¹ See, for example, Frost and Fire, Vol. I., pp. 189—192. The work abounds in ingenious suggestions for the construction of small working models, exemplifying the operation of many of those natural forces with which the geologist is specially concerned. See above, p. lv, note 1.

² The general principle upon which such an inference proceeds, is laid down by Mr. Mill,—only, perhaps, somewhat too broadly and positively,—thus:—"If we find, on and beneath the surface of our planet, masses exactly similar to

theory of the high antiquity of man upon the earth. This theory is inferred from a previous inference as to the cotemporaneousness of man with animals of species now extinct. This prior inference is based upon two principal lines of evidence;¹—namely, first, that of caves in which the bones of man are found associated with those of extinct species of animals; and, secondly, that of the “drift,” in which flint implements are found associated with similar bones. The analysis of this evidence is as difficult as it is important.

And, first, as to the evidence of the bone-caves. The mere juxtaposition of the bones of men and extinct animals does not necessarily imply their cotemporaneousness in life. The position of such caves in relation to the rivers, which now drain the localities in which they are found, most forcibly suggests, if it does not absolutely compel, the notion of some violent convulsion of nature,² which may have crowded the results of centuries or millenniums into the compass of hours or of

deposits from water, or to results of the cooling of matter melted by fire, we may justly conclude that such has been their origin; and if the effects, though similar in kind, are on a far larger scale than any which are produced now, we may rationally, and without hypothesis, conclude that the causes existed formerly with greater intensity. Further than this no geologist of authority has, since the rise of the present enlightened school of geological speculation, attempted to go.” —System of Logic, Book III., chap. xiv. § 7.

¹ I am speaking, of course, only of the evidence for the existence of man in the Post-Pliocene period. Of his existence in a yet earlier period there is not the shadow of a trace; and those who suggest the notion, with the view of maintaining the theory of the transmutation of the ape into the man, do so without the smallest colour of support from the geological evidence.

² See Lyell's *Antiquity of Man*, pp. 73, 74.

days. The probability of such a catastrophe tends certainly to confuse and blur the evidence; though that evidence still decidedly inclines, I think, towards an affirmation of the supposed cotemporaneousness.

Again, as to the evidence of the flint implements found in the drift. The very number of these implements is a difficulty in the way of believing them to be the work of man. Tools made with no slight labour and skill are not generally to be found dropped, by hundreds and even by thousands, in a limited area. Many of them, it is admitted, are not genuine tools, but are either the handiwork of nature, or the product of fraud. Nevertheless, on this question, *authority* is strong in favour of the genuineness of a number of these implements, sufficient to establish the point, that the work of man is found in the drift side by side with the remains of extinct species of animals. Here, again, the juxtaposition of the remains does not necessarily prove the coexistence of the living beings, represented on the one hand by the bones and teeth, and on the other hand by the tools and weapons and other implements.

Let it be granted, however, that this coexistence is, as from the evidence I think it is, highly probable. Then comes the further question as to the antiquity of man. *When* did the species, with which man coexisted, become extinct? How many hundreds, or thousands, or tens of thousands of years ago? What is the age of these bone-caves, and of this still older drift? That eminent geologist, Sir Charles Lyell, writing on this very subject with the fullest knowledge, refuses to give any positive reply to these ques-

tions.¹ He has collected a large assemblage of facts, pointing, some more, some less strongly, in the direction of a much longer duration of human life upon the earth, than had generally been supposed. But he has not committed himself to any estimate of that longer duration in years. It would be exceedingly difficult to make such an estimate, even were we at liberty to assume, that the forces now operating, and those alone, have operated always in the past, and with the same intensity as at present. We are precluded from making this assumption by the evidences of convulsion and catastrophe, which surround us on every side. These sudden and violent exertions of an immense and immeasurable force must not only have produced results all their own, but may also have accelerated temporarily the operation, and intensi-

¹ Thus, in his profoundly interesting work on "The Antiquity of Man," speaking of the "recent period," in reference to which such a calculation would be most feasible, he writes (pp. 372, 373):—"As for several calculations, in which certain archaeologists and geologists of merit have indulged, in the hope of arriving at some positive dates, or exact estimates of the minimum of time required for the changes in physical geography, or in the range and numerical preponderance of certain species of animals, or the advance in human civilisation in the Recent Period, or during the ages of stone, bronze, and iron, whether the computation related to the growth of peat, or to the conversion of water into land, since some lake settlements were founded, or the various depths at which, in the delta of the Tinière, vegetable soils have been met with, containing human bones and works of art of the Roman, the bronze, and the stone periods,—they can only be considered, as yet, as being tentative, and, if a rough approximation to the truth has been made, it is all that can be expected. They have led to the assignment of 4,000 and 7,000 years before our time as the lowest antiquity which can be ascribed to certain events and monuments; but much collateral evidence will be required to confirm these estimates, and to decide whether the number of centuries has been under or over-rated."

fied the effects, of the ordinary forces of nature.¹ At any rate they baffle us in every attempt to measure geological epochs by years.

Thus, at every stage of the inquiry into the antiquity of man upon the earth, it will be seen that the evidence is only probable, and that it belongs at some points to an order of probability, which is by no means very high. The result seems to be, that the theory of an extended antiquity must remain, for the present at least, only a theory,—neither positively proved, nor yet positively disproved, but with a decided preponderance of the evidence in its favour. Whether it can ever emerge from this preliminary stage of sufferance and trial into one of greater certainty and definiteness, seems to me to be, from the very nature of the case, extremely doubtful.

There is so much spurious science abroad, and the nature of scientific proof is, I am persuaded, so little understood, that it will be well to carry our illustration a little further. Let us examine very briefly, as a last and crowning instance, the case of historical criticism.

By historical criticism I mean that criticism of the narratives of past events, which claims to remove what is false and fabulous from them, and to reconstruct them upon a sound and solid basis. The scientific position of such criticism seems well worthy of consideration. For its claims are loudly supported in some quarters; and it has been applied to subjects in which all are most deeply interested.

¹ For example, the convulsion which disturbed a river-bed, would for a time immensely accelerate the deposition of gravel and sand along the course of the stream below the point of disturbance.

Take, as an example, the early history of Rome, which has been one great arena of such criticism, more especially from the time of Niebuhr. With all its fascinating interest, one is struck, at every point, by the entire want of scientific precision, which characterizes it. It is difficult to bring it even within the grasp of our examination; so vague and uncertain is it. As a *destructive* agent, indeed, it has at least a great semblance of power. Its radical weakness and insufficiency are made apparent, when it begins to *construct*.¹ It then becomes a field of little more than conjecture; a field in which even the elementary facts rest upon no indisputable ground, and in which, therefore, the passage from the elementary facts to any facts of the second order must be more or less arbitrary, precarious, and unsatisfactory. The result is just to destroy our confidence in the early history, as it has come down to us through Livy and other writers, without giving us anything solid in place of it.² If we have ever contrasted the

¹ Niebuhr has shown conclusively the impossibility of much of the earliest history of Rome in the form in which it has come down to us. See, for example, "Lectures on the History of Rome," (translated by Dr. Schmitz), Lecture I. But his endeavours to reconstruct the history show how precarious such a work must always be. Thus, in the first edition of his history he inclined strongly to the opinion that Rome was of Etruscan origin, and "even started the conjecture that it might be a colony from Cære." But in the second and third editions he retracted this view, and came to the conclusion that it was "not necessary to deny the Latin stock of the first Romans." See "History of Rome" (translated by Hare and Thirlwall), vol. I. pp. 384—387.

² "If this be so,"—writes Dr. Arnold (Hist. of Rome, vol. I. p. 99), after speaking of Niebuhr's view of the materials of the early history,—*"there rests a veil not to be removed, not only on the particular history of the early Romans, but on that which*

brilliancy, movement, and life of that early history with what Dr. Arnold himself calls "the meagre fragments of knowledge," "at once incomplete and without spirit,"¹ which criticism has to offer in its place, we may almost feel inclined to say with Goethe;—"If the Romans were great enough to write such stories, we might at least be great enough to believe them."²

It may be that we are doing historical criticism an injustice in submitting it to those severe tests, which we have gathered from the field of physical science. But if so, it must renounce its scientific pretensions, and be content to move in the lower sphere of that knowledge, which is not, like science, exact and systematic, and which consists of *opinions*, more or less valuable according to the worth of their author, and not of fixed truths. In

we should much more desire to know, and which in the case of Greece stands forth in such full light, the nature and power of their genius; what they thought, what they hated, and what they loved."

¹ History of Rome, vol. i. p. 100.

² Niebuhr himself felt the difficulty of making the sacrifice which the axioms of historical criticism, without which it cannot move a single step, demand. "It well became the eternal city," he writes (Hist. of Rome, vol. i. pp. 208, 209), "that its roots should be lost in infinity: nor was the story told by the poets of the infancy and deification of Romulus less in accord with the majesty of Rome. A god or no one must have founded it. While I acknowledge this, however, with a feeling, the sincerity of which none but a bigot, himself insincere, could seek to question; and while I allow the heart and the imagination their full claims; I at the same time assert the right of reason to refuse to admit anything as historical which cannot possibly be so; and I purpose, without excluding that noble tradition from its place at the threshold of my history, to inquire whether there be any possibility of ascertaining to what people the first Romans belonged, and what were the changes attending the rise of that State, which, when the light of historical truth begins to dawn, is Rome."

that case, while we give due weight to the *opinions* of men really great and eminent in such investigations, we shall not allow ourselves to be misled by the tone of confidence, in which they too frequently indulge. For example, even in the case of the great Niebuhr himself, whose works none can read without learning to love as well as to admire their author, we shall deliberately refuse our assent to language such as the following:—"It is with ancient history as it is with the king in the prophet, who had forgotten his dream: we must not merely interpret what the ancients read, but rediscover what they read; *and this may be done with confidence and success I entertain no fear of the result of my enquiries being ever overthrown.*"¹ Or, if veneration for Niebuhr's vast learning and wonderful ingenuity makes us hesitate for a moment before rejecting claims even so great and bold as these, let us listen to what others, who have followed him in the same wide field of conjectural research, have to say about him and his results. "Even in the first pages of my work," writes Michelet² "where alone I encounter that of Niebuhr, I have not servilely followed him; *I have often stood aloof from his audacious hypotheses.*" And even our own Arnold, than whom no one had a profounder respect and love for Niebuhr, writes in the preface to his Roman history;—"No acknowledgment can be too ample for the benefits which I have derived from Niebuhr; *yet I have not followed him blindly,*

¹ Hist. of Rome, vol. iv. p. 85., Lect. xi.—But, elsewhere, Niebuhr speaks with true scientific moderation. See, for example, Hist. of Rome, vol. i. Introduction.

² Roman Republic, p. 3. (Bogue's European Library.)

nor compiled my work from his." It is not thus that men speak of the great discoverers of physical science, nor of the truths which they have brought to light.

When historical criticism applies itself to the sacred books of the Christian church, it is not only impeded, and its results vitiated, by the inherent weakness of its own nature; but it is also still further embarrassed by the preliminary question of the admissibility of miracles and prophecy. In an ordinary history the supernatural, whenever it appears, is at once relegated by the critic,—rightly or wrongly, it matters not here to inquire,—to the domain of fiction.¹ To make this axiom of the critic a canon of biblical exegesis is to decide at once against the authenticity of that revelation of God, of which the Bible is the written record. On the other hand, to refuse to apply such a

¹ After giving the old Roman legend of Romulus, Niebuhr writes very finely, thus:—"This is the old tale, as it was written by Fabius, and sung in ancient sacred lays down to the time of Dionysius. It certainly belongs to anything but history. Its essence is the marvellous. We may strip this of its peculiarities, and pare away and alter, until it is reduced to a possible every day occurrence: but we ought to be fully convinced, that the *caput mortuum* which will remain, will be anything but a historical fact. Mythological tales of this sort are misty shapes, often no more than a *fata morgana*, the prototype of which is invisible, the law of its refraction unknown: and even were it not so, it would still surpass the power of reflection, to proceed so subtly and skilfully, as to divine the unknown original from these strangely blended forms. But such magical shapes are different from mere dreams, and are not without a hidden ground of real truth. The name of dreams belongs to the fictions invented by the later Greeks, when the tradition had become extinct, and when individuals indulged a wanton licence in altering the old legends; not considering that their diversity and multiplicity had been the work of the whole people, and was not a matter for individual caprice to meddle with."—*History of Rome*, vol. i., pp. 222, 223.

canon to the case of the historical scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is to introduce an element of additional uncertainty into the critical treatment of them. A Christian writer must necessarily close with the latter alternative, on pain of ceasing to be, in any distinctive sense of the word, a Christian; and must frankly admit how precarious are the results of historical criticism applied to a subject of a nature so exceptional. If then we are compelled, in sober seriousness, to withhold our approval from the positive and dogmatic tone in which Niebuhr describes the results of his application of criticism to the history of Rome; what shall we say to language like the following, in which a recent writer has described the results of his application of criticism to the Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua?

"Hitherto we have been advancing upon *certain* ground. It seems to follow as a necessary conclusion, from the facts which we have already had before us in Part I., that the account of the Exodus is in very essential parts not historically true, and that, being such, it cannot possibly have been written by Moses or by any one of his contemporaries." (Colenso, Part II., p. 226).

Of "the facts," examined by this writer in his Part I., there is hardly one of which a very different view may not be taken from that which he takes himself.¹ Many of his statements can be proved to be erroneous,—originating in miscon-

¹ The reader who peruses the first part of "The Pentateuch and Book of Joshua critically examined," side by side, and step by step, with "The Historic Character of the Pentateuch vindicated," and the late Dr. McCaul's "Examination of Bishop Colenso's difficulties,"—will understand why I say this.

ception or carelessness on his part. And this, we are told, is "*certain* ground," and the "conclusion" deduced from these often erroneous, and at the best doubtful, "facts," a "necessary" one!

Enough, I think, has been said on this subject to show, how vague and uncertain, comparatively speaking, is this third and last division of the field of science, by contrast with the preceding one; however much it may fill and strike the fancy, and feed and fascinate the spirit of speculation. The nature of the scientific proof here, as soon as we pass beyond the simple facts, rarely rises above a feeble probability or a low presumption; never rises to that height of moral certainty, to which physical science again and again attains. *It* lies in the lowest region of probable evidence; as *that* lies in the highest.

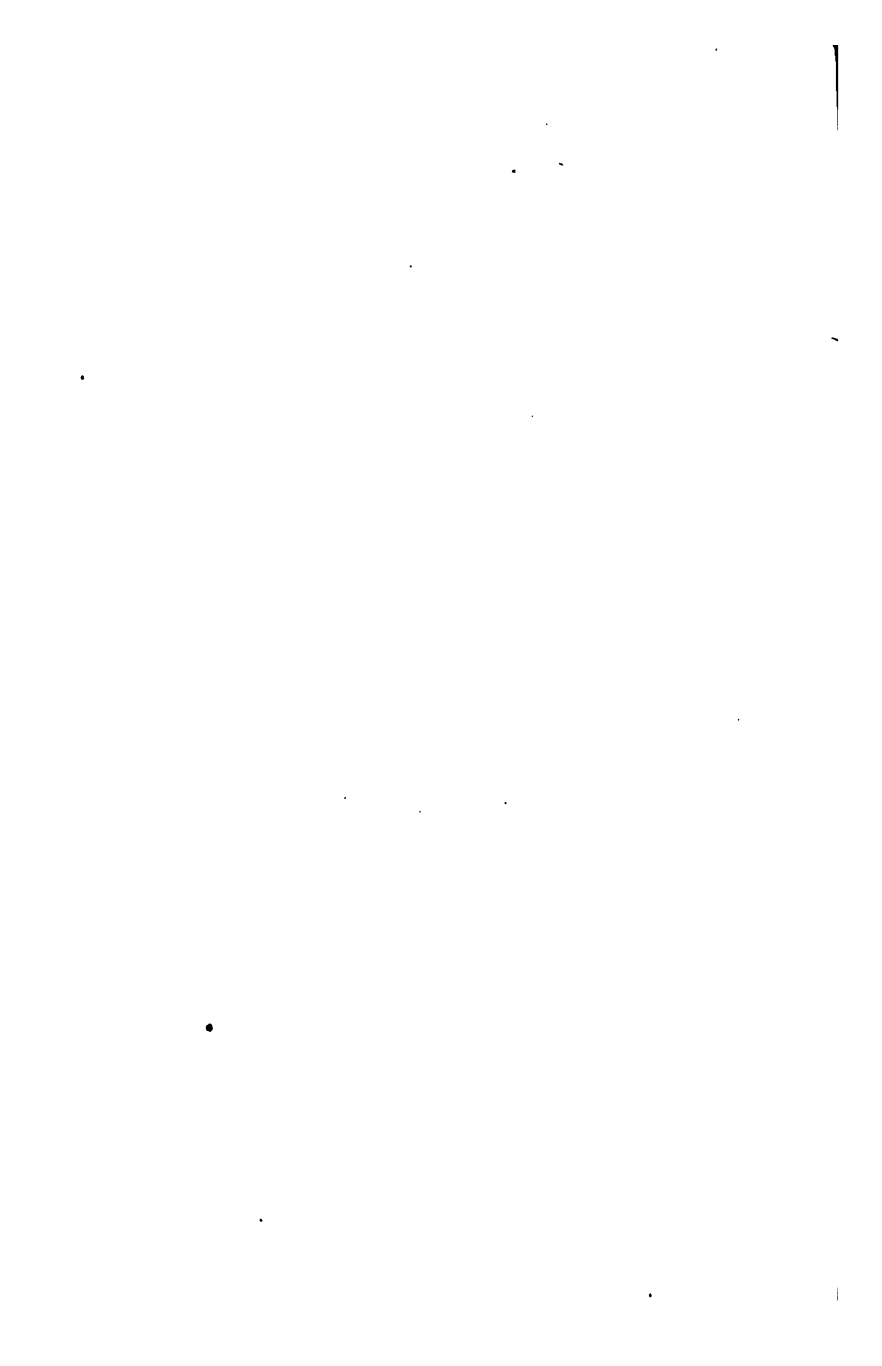
Here, then, I bring this difficult inquiry to a close. Had any similar work been attempted by some more competent writer, I would gladly have declined the task. But I am not acquainted with any work, which deals with the precise question, with which I have attempted to deal in the preceding essay; namely, the analysis of scientific proof into its simplest elements, at once as a general standard of comparison, and as a means of estimating the scientific position of one particular branch of knowledge, which the subject of the following sermons compelled me to speak of. I have only to add, that it is my firm belief that we have arrived at a time, when Butler's famous work on the "Analogy of Religion, natural and revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature," may be rewritten, with a somewhat different scope and purpose, from a magnificent vantage-ground,

and with an enormous increase in its weight of proof. I have only to express my own hopes and aspirations for the future, in the words of a living poet:—

“ Let knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of reverence in us dwell;
That mind and soul, according well,
May make one music as before,

“ But vaster.”————

ST. MARTIN'S VICARAGE, LEICESTER,
October, 1865.



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(First Sunday in Advent.)

Nov. 27th, 1864.

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SERMON I.

WHAT CHRISTIANITY IS.

First Sunday in Advent.

Nov. 27th, 1864.

2 COR. IV. 6.

God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

THE subject upon which I propose to enter this afternoon, and which I hope, God helping me, to pursue on the three Sundays following this, is that of Christianity and its Evidences. And in opening such a subject, I cannot but freely confess how incompetent I feel to the worthy handling of it. If Christianity be indeed what we as Christians believe it to be, any handling of it, in the way of exposition and defence, even by the wisest and best of men, must be more or less unworthy of it. Yet at the same time, every handling of it, that is thoughtful and reverent, however unequal it be to

the magnitude of the theme, need not be without its use and its value. It may present the subject in a new light to some hearers; and in that light they may discern its beauty better, and feel its truth more powerfully and with deeper conviction. I would, therefore, at the outset, and once for all, ask your indulgence; and, should anything strike you in the hearing as feebly or unsatisfactorily said, I would beg you to set it down to the incompetence of the pleader, and certainly not to any inherent weakness in the cause.

I use the word Christianity, in default of any better term, to describe all *that* in our faith and hope, which belongs to us distinctively as Christians. And the first question, which we have to ask and answer, is—"What is this? What is the real essence and substance of our common Christianity, or of that Christian faith, which all 'who profess and call themselves Christians', alike are bound to hold?" We can make no step towards the consideration of the *Evidences* of Christianity, until we have decided what that Christianity is, whose evidences we seek.

1. It would seem, at first sight, as if there could be no difficulty in answering a question so simple as this. And yet when we look around us, and see how the question is being practically an-

swered by the popular opinion of our own time, it becomes clear that the question is not so simple as it seems, and that it does not admit of that off-hand answer which we are inclined to give to it. In the minds of some persons, the question, "What is Christianity?" is obviously confounded and identified with quite a different question, "What is the Bible?" In the minds of others, Christianity has become little more than a theory of propitiation or atonement, and every impeachment of the accuracy of their own particular theory of that great subject is supposed to be a blow levelled at Christianity itself. In the minds, again, of others Christianity is viewed as above all things, an authoritative disclosure of a future state of endless reward and endless punishment, and of the conditions upon which the latter may be avoided and the former secured; and the breathing of the slightest hope that the punishments of that future state may possibly not be endless, is regarded as equivalent to a denial of the very essence of the Faith.

(a) In considering what a thing *is*, it is often convenient to consider, first of all, what it is *not*. When St. Paul would tell the Romans what "the Kingdom of God" is, he tells them first what it is not. It is not, he says,¹ "meat and drink"; it is

¹ Rom. xiv. 17.

not anything outward and ceremonial: it is "righteousness and peace and joy, in the Holy Ghost." In examining what Christianity is, we have nothing whatever to do with the question, what the Bible is. The question, "What is the Bible?" is indeed a very important and a very interesting question; and, God willing, we shall hope to examine it by-and-by. But in relation to the question, "What is Christianity?" it is entirely subsequent and secondary. So far as we are concerned at the present moment, the Bible may be infallible or fallible, inspired or not inspired; and, if inspired, its inspiration may be plenary, or verbal, or partial, or in accordance with any other conception of the possible limits and nature of Inspiration. It needs but a very little thought and knowledge of facts, to see that this is so. Abraham was certainly called, and Moses may very possibly have legislated, before a single word of the Bible was written. Christ came, and the Christian Church was founded, years before a single line of the Scriptures of the New Testament was penned, and scores of years before the Canon of the New Testament was completed. That which is so obviously independent of the Bible in point of time, history, and fact,—which *was*, when the Bible was not; which continued to

be, while the Bible was for centuries a sealed book;—obviously cannot be in any way dependent upon a theory as to the mode, whether special or ordinary, in which the Scriptures were written.

This is a very important point. At the present day, when the Bible is attacked,—when it is proved, or supposed to be proved, inconsistent with itself, at variance with science, repugnant to our moral instincts,—it is imagined at once, by believers and unbelievers alike, that the knell of Christianity is being sounded. Believers may dismiss their fears. Unbelievers must postpone their triumph. Even were it all as they say, they have but effected a lodgment in an outer line of defence, which is fully commanded from the interior works. They must either proceed to carry the citadel, or withdraw altogether with loss and shame from the assault.

(b) If the question, “What is Christianity?” must not be identified with the secondary and subsequent question, “What is the Bible?” still less must it be confounded with the question, “What, in relation to the Divine mind and will, is the nature of Christ’s atonement?” To do this is indeed to substitute the part, and that a comparatively small part, for the whole. Search the Scriptures through, and gather out of them

every passage which can by any possibility be regarded as bearing upon the subject of the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ.¹ Then compare the bulk of the selections thus made with the bulk of the remainder. It is but a few verses or phrases by the side of whole pages and books. Out of those verses and phrases there is not one which can be shown to involve necessarily that particular theory of the Atonement, which is now so popular, and according to which the justice of God is satisfied, and his anger against sin propitiated, by the punishment of Christ in our stead. To identify this theory of atonement with Christianity itself,—to make this theory the touchstone of Christian Faith, and the essence of Christian Doctrine,—is not only to mistake the part for the whole, but is also to read that part wrong. We view it through a traditional medium, coloured deeply though unconsciously by human intellect and human fancy; persuade ourselves that the colour is in the object and not in the medium; and then are surprised and perplexed with those who would fain view the same object simply as it is in itself, in the pure Divine light of the Scriptures of truth.

(c) Once more, though it be unquestionably true

¹ "Sermons on Sacrifice and Propitiation," pp. 128—130.

that "life and immortality" have been "brought to light through the Gospel,"¹ yet it must be remembered that the language of Christ and his disciples lends little countenance to any attempt to speculate, finally and dogmatically, upon the nature of the future state, its misery and its bliss. That "whatsoever a man soweth, *that* he shall also reap;"² that "it shall be well with the righteous, and ill with the wicked;"³ of *this* we are certainly informed by revelation, and this is fully confirmed both by natural conscience and the experience of the present life. But when we proceed to press the language of Scripture, and often a single word of dubious import, into the service of proving the endless and hopeless misery of the wicked; and when, further, we do this avowedly for the selfish reason that, unless we can maintain the endlessness of future punishment, we cannot maintain the endlessness of future happiness;⁴ and when by way of climax we add the

¹ 2 Tim. i. 10.

² Gal. vi. 7, 8.

³ Isa. iii. 10, 11.

⁴ If God is altogether neutral in the matter; if He would as soon give us death as give us life; *then*, certainly, we might argue that our assurance of the endless misery of the wicked was the measure of our assurance of the endless happiness of the blessed. But it is almost inconceivable, that any one should argue thus, who believes that Jesus is the Son of God, and that the Son is "of one substance with the Father". The Cross of Christ, and not the Greek adjective *αἰώνιος* ("everlasting"), is our

rash assertion, that this belief in endless misery is one of the most distinctive elements of our Christian faith, and the chief safeguard of human morality ; we are then really in the perilous position of adding to the Revelation, of which we profess to be zealous and faithful guardians,—and, by such additions, compromising its credibility, its acceptance, and its power. In the language of St. Paul, we are “handling the word of God deceitfully,” or adulterating his message to men with a mixture of human speculation ; instead of setting ourselves simply, “by manifestation of the

real warrant for believing in the unchangeable certainty of future bliss. And the more firmly we hold by the Cross, the easier it is to trust our happiness in God’s hands for ever and ever, and the harder it is for us to believe in the consignment of the vast majority of mankind to a state of endless, hopeless torment, which is intended by God Himself to be only penal and retributive, and never remedial and curative.—*Elements of our Christian Faith*, Pref., pp. xvii—xxiii.

Dr. Pusey, in a recently published sermon on “Everlasting Punishment,” p. 23, asks, “Of what could Plato or any Greek-speaking Heathen or Christian understand it” (the word *αἰώνιος*), “save of that which is truly everlasting?”—The question rather is,—“How would persons familiar, as the apostles of Christ certainly were, with the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, understand and employ the word?” Now the word occurs one hundred and ten times in the canonical books of the Old Testament, forty of these being in the first four books of Moses. Amongst these forty times, it is only used once (Gen. xxi. 33.) of “that which is truly everlasting.” In the great majority of cases it is used of those ordinances and statutes of the ceremonial law, which have long ago passed away.

truth, to commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."¹ Were we at liberty to use the language of Scripture to aid our natural lust of penetrating into the mysteries of the world beyond the grave, it would be as easy to prove the absolute extinction or annihilation of the wicked,² as to prove their endless misery. The assurance of our Christian hope is that all things in heaven and earth will at last be reconciled to God.³ For the rest, reverent silence suiteth best. The more we know of God, the more entirely can we trust the Future to his wisdom, justice, and love: the less are we inclined to fill with precarious human speculations, the vacuum which He has seen well to leave.

2. Thus much, then, as to what Christianity is not. It is not to be confounded with any theory of Inspiration, or of Atonement, or of Eternal Punishment. All these things do but weave a thick veil between us and it, and hide its glory from us. And the hiding of the *glory* is the subduing also of the *power*. The veil must be taken away, in order that the splendour may shine freely out, and the Gospel of Christ be found and felt to be that which St. Paul affirms it

¹ 2 Cor. iv. 2.

² Matt. iii. 12, x. 28; Phil. iii. 19; 2 Thes. i. 9.

³ Eph. i. 10; Coloss. i. 20.

is, "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."¹

In order to remove that veil, we must go back to the fountain-head of the Apostolical times, and see what Christianity was to the earliest disciples of Christ. No one has ever doubted that in the Scriptures of the New Testament, quite irrespective of any theory as to their inspiration, we have a true and accurate record of the faith of the early Church. We know beyond a doubt what those things were, which, whether rightly or wrongly, were "most surely believed" amongst the followers of Jesus within a few years after his death. We are not now concerned with the question whether their belief was right or wrong, reasonable or unreasonable. We shall have to consider that question subsequently. What I ask you now to notice is, that we need be in no manner of doubt as to what their belief was. St. Paul's First Epistle to the Thessalonians, for example, carries the written evidence back to a point only some twenty years removed from the death of Jesus. And from that point onwards we have a series of documents, reaching over a period of many years,—five-and-thirty at least,—and bearing abundant testimony to the faith of the

¹ Rom. i. 16.

Church of the Apostles and their immediate successors.

In studying the Scriptures, then, with the object of ascertaining what the faith of the primitive Church was, the first thing that strikes us is its great simplicity; and the second, its amazing practical power. It knew nothing of those doctrinal refinements, in which modern orthodoxy, which is often only another name for modern heresy, delights. And it was eminently practical; a faith which worked by love; a faith proved and approved by its fruits. Let us give our best attention to both these points.

(a) First, as to the great simplicity of the primitive faith. The early Church received the materials of its faith from those who had seen Jesus;—had lived with him, walked with him, talked with him, had seen him die, seen him (as they affirmed) after his resurrection, seen him ascend into heaven, seen the fiery tongues which attested the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. The first Apostles of Christ were, above everything else, “witnesses of his resurrection”;¹ and the faith of their first converts was, above everything else, a faith in certain definite facts: those facts all gathering around, and

¹ Acts i. 22, ii. 32, iii. 15, iv. 33, v. 32, x. 41.

centering in, the person of a Man who was known amongst his cotemporaries as "Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee."¹ The cardinal fact, upon which everything else hinged, was his resurrection. They believed that, having died upon the cross and having been laid in the grave, He did actually and positively rise again from the dead. And mainly from this fact, harmonising as it did with every other fact relating to Him, they drew the great inference that He was indeed that Christ or Messiah, of whom the ancient Jewish prophets had spoken,—the true everlasting King and Priest of men, the Son of the living God.

Having attained to this standing-point, and being thus, in a manner of speaking, to use St. Paul's pregnant phrase, "*in Christ*," they looked above them, and they looked around them, with altered eyes. It was a "new creation." The "old things had passed away; and, behold, all things had become new, and all things *of God*."² "In the face of Jesus Christ" they found, as St. Paul says in our text, "the light of the know-

¹ Matt. xxi. 11.

² 2 Cor. v. 17, 18. "Wherefore, if a man be in Christ, it is a new creation: the old things have passed away; behold all things have become new; and all things of that God who reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation.

ledge of the glory of God." Jesus Christ, the Son of God, had revealed the Father. It was God Himself who had "shined in their hearts." The darkness had passed away, and the true light had come.¹ They beheld in Jesus the glory of God's own grace, righteousness, and love. They saw how good and just he was; how He was seeking his human creatures; seeking them at infinite cost, and with unwearied pains; seeking them in order to reconcile them, heart and soul, to himself. "God himself," they saw and said, "was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself."² The Will, that ruled the Universe, was a *reconciling* Will; a Will that was everlastingly at war with the sin and the ignorance that degrade and corrupt and are the curse of men, and was seeking to save them from all these and to bring them into blessed peace and harmony with Itself. The message, of which they found themselves the bearers, expressed itself in such touching words as these: "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."³

Thus their faith in Christ brought a new heaven around them; or, rather, opened the true kingdom of heaven to them. But the same faith

¹ 1 John ii. 8.

² 2 Cor. v. 19.

³ 2 Cor. v. 20.

transfigured earth as well as opened heaven. "Henceforth," St. Paul writes, "we know no man after the flesh:"¹ we cannot shut our eyes any longer to the fact that as surely as we stand in fleshly relations to some, so surely do we stand in spiritual relations to all;—that as surely as God is our Father, so surely are men our brothers. It was the true doctrine of Liberty, Equality, Fraternity; which, however much it may have been prostituted by designing demagogues or degraded into an excuse for license and riot, is true still. The Christian watchword is still Liberty, Equality, Fraternity:—*Liberty*; liberty not to please ourselves, but to serve God and do his will:—*Equality*; for God is no respecter of persons, and in his sight all men are equal:—*Fraternity*; for all men are brothers, and must live accordingly, not in selfish isolation, but in kindly mutual helpfulness.

(b) Let so much suffice as to the simplicity of the primitive faith. Its keystone was the confession, "I believe that the man Jesus did actually rise from the dead, and is the Son of God:" I believe that the Son of God did actually come in human flesh, and die upon the cross, in order that He might reveal the Father,

¹ 2 Cor. v. 16.

and reconcile men to the Father." And now, in the second place, let us briefly consider the vast practical power of this simple faith.

I will give you just two illustrations of the extraordinary influence which this faith exercised upon the minds of those who received it, and receiving it found light and peace in it. One of the first things that the Christians did, was to establish a community of goods amongst themselves.¹ It was a mistake, we say. So it was; and by-and-by they found that it was a mistake, and abandoned the practice. But I ask you to note the fact, as a remarkable proof of the intense power which their new faith exercised upon their minds. The innate love of property,—the natural selfishness of the heart,—the lust of getting and having,—these strong human passions crumbled and fell away in a moment, in the presence of their faith in that Jesus, the Son of God, in whom all men are brothers. Since all are brothers, they said amongst themselves, let us all share and share alike. There was no compulsion in the matter.² The Apostles allowed the practice: they did not enforce, they hardly even encouraged it. It was a common sentiment which possessed the new society; an instinctive expression of the

¹ Acts ii. 44, 45, iv. 32.

² Acts v. 4.

strange rush of love which animated its members, one towards another. How strong and living must have been the faith, which could produce a spectacle so unwonted, so extraordinary !

Take one other illustration of the working of the same mighty power. In a few years the Gospel of Christ had spread from Jerusalem as its centre in every direction round about. Within fifty years of the death of Jesus, there were, as the letters of St. Paul show, churches at Ephesus, at Colosse, in Galatia, at Philippi, at Thessalonica, at Corinth, at Rome. The Gospel had penetrated the savagery of Asia Minor, the civilization of Greece, the despotism of Rome : and *this*, at the cost of hardships, perils, and sufferings innumerable, on the part of those who preached it. In those days the Christian Apostle or Evangelist carried his life in his hand. Violent mobs or reckless magistrates might take it from him at any moment. Let the experience of one suffice as a specimen of all ; and then let us consider how strong must have been the faith, how mighty in its effects, which could endure to encounter such dangers and such hardships. "Of the Jews," so writes St. Paul, "five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered ship-

wreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep ; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren ; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness."¹

3. Such was the primitive faith ; so simple in its nature, so potent in its operation. In the most ancient Creed of the Christian Church, which is to this day our baptismal formula and our daily confession, we find an accurate reflection of this faith. For what is the Apostles' Creed but a summary of definite facts, all tending to explain to us the nature of God, the person of Christ, and the work of the Spirit ? We look in vain there for the dogmas which are so prominent in our ordinary theology ; the infallibility of the Bible, the propitiation of God's anger by the punishment of Christ, the endlessness of future torment. Equally in vain do we look for these in that second great Creed, which, with the exception of a few words, is recognised by all the Churches of Christendom as a faithful exposition of Christian doctrine. The great object of the Nicene Creed is to protest

¹ 2 Cor. xi. 24—27.

against that parting of the Son from the Father,¹ that division of the Substance of the Godhead, which had produced then, and is producing still, such disastrous and ruinous effects upon Christian faith. It follows strictly in the line traced out by the older Creed, only enlarging and defining, where enlargement and definition were needed, and could be safely applied. Unless, with the Church of Rome, we are prepared to hold some theory of the necessary development of Christian doctrine, we must admit that in the two most ancient Creeds of the Universal Church we possess all the essential elements of our common Christian Faith.

If now we return to the question, What is

¹ Unfortunately there are many so-called orthodox persons at the present day, who shrink from any close scrutiny and practical application of the language of the Catholic Creeds, when they speak of the Son as "of one Substance with the Father," on the plea that such language is altogether mysterious and incomprehensible. This is partly owing to the doctrine, now so prevalent, and which the Bampton Lectures of Dr. Mansel so forcibly express, that man cannot know God, and that God's revelation of Himself in Jesus Christ is "regulative" only, not absolute. The result is, either the loss of all deep and earnest convictions, or else a blind and tenacious clinging to the popular religious notions of the day, which tend rather to exclude than to admit the pure light of the Gospel of God.

For a thorough examination and complete refutation of Dr. Mansel's curious application of the "Philosophy of the Conditioned" to Theology, see Mr. J. S. Mill's recently published "Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy," chap. vii.

Christianity? our reply will be that it is, before all things, *Light*: light upon God and man,—light upon God's character and upon his purpose for men,—“the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” I need not tell you how frequently the writers of the New Testament revert to this image of *light*, and how expressive it was to them. They *had been* in darkness as to God,—his Nature, Will, and Counsels for men. They *had* known the wretchedness of that darkness. Now they can speak of “the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God.”¹ Now they can say, “The darkness is past, and the true light shineth.” Now they can add the practical warning, “Ye were once in darkness, but now light in the Lord: walk as children of light.”² And, “This is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”³ In the face of Jesus Christ—above all, in the cross of Jesus Christ—

¹ 2 Cor. iv. 4.² Eph. v. 8.³ 1 John i. 5—7.

they read the everlasting Will of the unchangeable God, writ as with letters of fire, graven in the rock for ever; and they read it there as a Will to cleanse men from their sins, and to reconcile them to Himself. And in this Will thus revealed, and not revealed only, but at the same time made mighty and effectual for its purpose, they found light and peace, joy and strength.

I have not shrunk from speaking to you very plainly about modern perversions and adulterations of the ancient Faith of the Church; but I have done so, only because I believe that they tend to hide the glory of God from us, and to render the blessed Gospel of Christ ineffectual for the very object for which it was given. Certainly the results of our modern Christianity are by no means satisfactory, and might well lead us to suspect that we are not walking in the light, in which Apostles and Evangelists of old walked, so steadfastly, so rejoicingly, and with such abundant fruit of good works. Did it but present itself to our minds as a most certain, unquestionable fact, that the eternal, almighty God is seeking us his sinful, guilty creatures; seeking us as a Father his children;—seeking us even at the expense of the Cross itself; seeking us in order to deliver us from the guilt, pollution, and bondage of sin, and to

reconcile us inwardly to himself, will to Will, heart to Heart, spirit to Spirit; did we but see all this, as we might see it, "in the face of Jesus Christ," the eternal Son of God; how would it call out our love, our reverence, our gratitude, our hearty acceptance, our hatred of sin and unrighteousness, our earnest effort to "live no longer to ourselves, but to him who died and rose again for us!"

It is written concerning one of the cities in which Paul preached the Gospel, that his Jewish hearers "received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so;" and that "therefore many of them believed."¹ To this test, the test of the Holy Scriptures, Christian as well as Jewish, I gladly submit all that I have said this afternoon. It is from them that I have learned to speak as I have now spoken. Search them diligently for yourselves, brethren, day after day, month after month, year after year; and you will be able to verify the message which I have now delivered to you, and to satisfy yourselves whether it be in truth the word of God, or no.

It is written again concerning another city, in which Paul also preached the Gospel, that he closed his grand discourse to its cultivated and intellectual

¹ Acts xvii. 11, 12.

inhabitants with these weighty words,—appealing therein to that universal sense of responsibility and consequent judgment which lurks in every heart: “God hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance to all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.”¹ I cannot conceal it from myself, I dare not conceal it from you, that the word of the Gospel of Christ, spoken to us in this life, will, if unheeded, condemn us at the last day. It lies with us now to choose whether the sentence of most just judgment, pronounced upon us then, shall be *this*: “Well done, good and faithful servant: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord;” or *this*: “Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” The last public utterance of our Saviour himself, recorded by St. John, was this: “I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.”²

¹ Acts xvii. 31.² John xii. 46—48.

SERMON II.

INTERNAL EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY.

Second Sunday in Advent.

Dec. 4th, 1864.

1 JOHN v. 10.

He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.

WE saw last Sunday that Christianity is, in fact, "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." This is St. Paul's own definition of it. No definition could be more complete or more expressive. When the context of the passage is brought into view, the definition becomes still more luminous and more instructive. In the preceding chapter St. Paul has been contrasting the old testament, covenant, or dispensation of the *Law*, with this new testament, covenant, or dispensation of the *Gospel*. He describes that older dispensation as a "ministration" or "ministry" of the "letter," of "condemnation," of "death." Whereas this new dispensation, on the contrary,

is a "ministration," or "ministry," not of letter,—that is, not in writing,—but of "spirit"; not of condemnation, but of "righteousness"; not of death, but of "life." This "ministry," he says at the commencement of the fourth chapter, "we have." Paul himself, along with others, was a minister of this new dispensation of spirit, righteousness, and life. He counts it no hardship, but a great mercy, to be entrusted with such an office, perilous, difficult, and arduous though it was. The thought of it nerves him;—gives him strength and courage; courage to face suffering and death; courage also to be honest, faithful, and bold in the utterance of his message. "Therefore," so he writes, "seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word," or message, "of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." And then he adds, "But if our Gospel be hid,"—or "veiled," so that its glory is not discerned,—"it is hid to them that are lost:" properly, "it is hid in, or in the case of, those perishing ones,"—"in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of

the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them:" or, more properly, "so that they do not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." And then come the words of our text of last Sunday: "For we preach not ourselves but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

1. Two things I would beg you to notice in this passage, by way of introduction to that part of our subject which is to occupy us this afternoon, and which I have briefly described as the "internal evidences" of Christianity, or, those evidences of its truth which it carries in its own bosom. St. Paul uses, you see, two expressions, one in the fourth and one in the sixth verse, which are mutually explanatory of one another. He speaks of "the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God;" and he speaks also of "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

(a) We have already seen that the foundations of our Christian Faith are laid in the Person of

Jesus of Nazareth, a well-known man, who lived mostly in Galilee, and died a violent death on the cross at Jerusalem during the reign of Tiberius. All alike, friends and foes, believers and unbelievers, have conspired to sing the praise of Jesus, and to confess the glory of his character and the grandeur of his work. Admiration, reverence, and love of Jesus, springing out of the felt beauty and nobleness of his character, were the ever-deepening sentiments of the disciples towards their Master during his lifetime. Even before his death they had learned to say, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God;" and He, in reply, had said to them, "Upon this rock I will build my church." But it was not till after his death, resurrection, ascension, and the coming of the promised Spirit of truth and holiness, that they saw the full meaning of their own confession, and understood all that was implied in the words, "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." If Jesus is the Christ, then the glory of the man Jesus is the glory of that Christ,—that anointed King-Priest,—of whom seers prophesied and psalmists sang. If Jesus is that Son of God, who is the express image of the Father, then the glory of Jesus is the glory of God; and "the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ" is at the same

time "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God."

I want you to feel your way down into the depths of these divine words. The confession, "Jesus is the Son of God," enables us at once to transfer all that we see and feel to be beautiful, admirable, and glorious in Jesus, to God Himself. Study the life of Jesus, my brethren, until your eyes begin to open and your hearts to expand to the glory of it. Meditate upon his love, his righteousness, his patience, his courage, his sympathy, his boundless self-sacrifice. Then say to yourselves: "Jesus the Son is the image of God the Father. The glory which smites my soul with amazement, love, and reverence, is the glory of the Divine Nature. The splendour of the unseen, eternal, almighty God, is reflected in the person, character, and work of Jesus the Man. The light which I behold, is the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

Thus the glory of Jesus is the glory of the invisible God. In Jesus,—known to his disciples by his actual words and works,—known to us by the written records of those words and works,—in Jesus, God is known. The knowledge of Jesus is the knowledge of God. The face of Jesus Christ reflects the face of God as truly as a polished

mirror reflects the sun. And where is that face clearest, and that mirror brightest? Where is Jesus most himself,—if we may use the expression,—most true to himself? where, but on the Cross? The Cross, concentrating as it does in one dazzling, burning spot all the rays of the glory of Jesus, does thereby become the most perfect expression of the nature and the glory of God. We look at the Cross of Jesus, and we behold God. Outwardly and with the eye of the flesh we see only a suffering, dying man. But inwardly and with the eye of the spirit we see deep down into the very heart of God.¹

And what a vision is there! What a vision of righteousness and of love! Righteousness and love, not contending against one another, but striving together, at infinite cost and pains, to save a sinful

¹ If we are to have any real Christian unity at home, if the Gospel is to be effectually propagated abroad, we *must* look more simply at the Cross of Christ, as God's own way of reaching men and winning them from sin and death to Himself. Alas! to many minds the Cross has dwindled down into a theory of the mode by which God has contrived an escape for men from the punishment which their sins deserve in another world. And hence there is little or no power in it to condemn and conquer sin. Let any one carefully and thoroughly consider the Scriptural way of regarding the Cross, and he will see how far our current theories of propitiation have carried us from it. See, for example, Rom. vi. 10—12; 2 Cor. v. 14, 15; Gal. i. 4; Tit. ii. 14. 1 Pet. i. 18, 19; ii. 24; iii. 18.

world from its sins ! Hard and blind indeed must that heart be, which can look on such a vision and remain unmoved ; untouched by some faint sense of the exceeding love of God, unvisited by some faint conviction of the exceeding sinfulness and hatefulness of sin. The " God of this world," with his lusts, his deceits, his vanities, must indeed, as St. Paul says, have blinded the eyes of those, who cannot, or who will not, see the light of this glory of God in the face of Jesus the crucified.

(*b*) Now, further, and in addition to this, I would beg you to notice how strongly and clearly St. Paul lays down the truth, that the Gospel of Christ can and does find a response to itself in the heart of man. He describes himself, in the exercise of his apostolical office, as " by manifestation of the truth commending himself to every man's conscience,"—or, more properly, " to every consciousness of men,"—" in the sight of God." Address yourself, he seems to say, to any side of human consciousness,—heart or head, reason, conscience, or soul,—and the truth of God, if it be only properly manifested, will commend itself. There will be found *that* in man, which will rise up within him and say, " It is good, and it is true." Where this is not the case, where the Gospel is hid, its glory veiled, and its truth undiscerned, *there*,

according to St. Paul, the fault must be traced to the influence of a foreign usurping Power, which has gained the attention of these unbelieving minds, has blinded them to the true realities, and is leading them rapidly away to destruction. Left to itself, in its normal state, undisturbed by any external forces of sin, the world, and the devil, the human heart cannot but acknowledge the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ,—spring joyfully forward to embrace “the Gospel,” or good news, of it,—and confess that it is “light” and “truth.”

Hence it is that it becomes so necessary for us to clear Christianity, or let us say now, the Gospel of Christ, from all those extraneous elements, all those blots and blemishes, whether modern or ancient, which disguise its beauty from us and impede the freeness of its action upon the heart. For if there is to be this glad and thankful recognition on the part of the human consciousness in all its workings, of which St. Paul speaks, the “truth” must be “*manifested*,” and that which is manifested must be “*truth*,”—truth pure and unadulterated, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. If the Gospel of Christ fails to meet that joyful acceptance which is its due,—so far from saying, as some men are saying now, “Oh, it must stand upon *authority*; it cannot stand, it

was never intended to stand, upon its own merits;" we shall feel bound most solemnly to consider, whether, after all, the fault does not lie, mainly if not entirely, in our manifestation or presentment of it. Certainly St. Paul lends no countenance to the notion that we must just receive the Gospel on authority, however much it may contradict our natural instincts, our reason, and our conscience. Had it been so, his own apostolical mission must have been an utter failure; and all our efforts to spread the Gospel now must fail also. The very existence of Christianity in the world, as a form of religious belief, would be an inexplicable phenomenon; and its further extension, an absolute impossibility.

But indeed it is not St. Paul alone who lays down the great principle that the minister of the Gospel must "by manifestation of the truth commend himself to every consciousness of men in the sight of God;" and that there is in it a "light" which the spirit of man can perceive, and a "glory" of God, to which the heart and soul of man can hardly be insensible. Not only *his* language, but that of St. Peter and St. John and of our Lord himself, proceeds entirely on the supposition that the word or message of God to men in Christ Jesus carries its own credentials

with it, is most perfectly adapted to meet all the requirements and all the cravings of the human heart, and in that perfect adaptation finds its highest and its mightiest testimony. St. John, in the passage from which our text is taken, after speaking of the witness of the Spirit and the water and the blood, adds, "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself." St. Peter describes the same deep answer of the soul to the truth of the Gospel as "the dawning of the day" and "the rising of the day-star in the heart."¹ Our Lord, in one of his most remark-

¹ 2 Pet. i. 19. The whole passage (vv. 16—21) is very remarkable. Three kinds of testimony are adduced by St. Peter in evidence of the truth of the Gospel: (i) That of the actual "eye-witnesses" of the "majesty" of Jesus Christ (vv. 16—18); (ii) That of "the prophetic word," which he pronounces "more sure" than the preceding; "more sure," that is, not to the actual eye-witnesses themselves, but to those who received their report; and "more sure," inasmuch as that which comes to us through the exercise of our own understanding engaged upon this "prophetic word," carries more weight with it, and gives us greater confidence, than that which we merely receive on the report of others; (iii) That of the actual light itself, coming into the heart. The second is "more sure" than the first; but the third is to the second, as the break of day to the "light," or more properly the "candle," "that shineth in a dark," or "dreary," "place." The external must be transfigured into the internal; the light of the lamp outside must become the light of day breaking within, before the soul of man can be fully satisfied, and come to its anchorage and its rest. And when that day does dawn within, we feel no more disposition to argue about it, or to prove it, than

able parables, compares the adaptation of "the Word" to the heart, to that mysterious adaptation of the seed to the soil, whereby the juxtaposition of the two produces germination, development, growth.¹ The Gospel of St. John is one long record of the grounds upon which Jesus claimed the faith of his countrymen in Himself and his mission; those grounds being in fact three, his character, his message, his works.² He did not tell men to lay aside reason and to disown conscience, in order to believe on Him; but simply bade them do the will of God. "My doctrine," said He, "is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."³ The real hindrance, which we feel a disposition to argue about the broad light of the natural day, or to prove that the sun is shining. The light proves itself to be what it is, simply by being what it is; and we see and confess that it is *light*, and walk in the joy and comfort of it. See Campbell's "Thoughts on Revelation," pp. 16—28.

¹ Mark iv. 26—29.

² See more especially John vii.—x. containing St. John's account of the period between the Feast of Tabernacles and the Feast of Dedication, in the last autumn of our Lord's earthly life. This period was spent in the close neighbourhood of Jerusalem, most likely at Bethany; and was spent in continual conflict with the Scribes and Pharisees of the metropolis of Judaism. The record of it brings out very forcibly the grounds upon which Jesus claimed to be received as the promised Messiah, and the moral hindrances to that reception on the part of his hearers.

prevents men from appreciating the glory of the Gospel, *when it is truly and adequately presented to them*, is, according to Jesus, as well as according to Paul, a moral one. They are not in earnest: they are not set upon doing the will of God: "the God of this world hath blinded their minds:" frivolity, carelessness, worldliness, wickedness,—*these* bar the door of the heart which reason and conscience would gladly open, and prevent it from seeing and rejoicing in "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

2. I trust that I have now made it sufficiently clear to you, that I am advancing no novel theory, but am only speaking according to the language of Jesus himself and his disciples, or, in other words, (in order that I may not seem to be taking anything for granted, which has not yet been distinctly proved,) according to the earliest conception of Christianity, when I plead for its "internal Evidences;" that is to say, its inherent power of commending itself to every department of human consciousness. Let us proceed to examine and illustrate this part of our subject further.

It has never been doubted that the motive power of Christianity on the Divine side is, as on the human side it ought to be, *Love*. The words, "God so loved the world, that He gave his only-

begotten Son;"¹ "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us;"² "God is Love;"³ and many others of similar import, have always been held decisive by Christians of all churches and schools on this subject. Equally certain is it, that this love of God is a *Fatherly* love; and that it works through Christ to accomplish the reconciliation of men to God, of the children to the Father. St. Paul's summary is, "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself."⁴ In Christ the reconciling will is discerned; and in Christ the reconciling power is felt. The reconciliation is accomplished, when the will of the children is wholly at one with the Will of the Father, and when the love of God is thus perfected,⁵ and his righteousness fulfilled in us. The ultimate truth, upon which everything else rests, is the living Fatherliness of the righteous God and Father "of the spirits of all flesh," seeking the recovery, the regeneration, the salvation of the lost and wandering children.

¹ John iii. 16.

² Rom. v. 8.

³ 1 John iv. 8, 16.

⁴ 2 Cor. v. 19.

⁵ See 1 John ii. 5, iv. 12. The love of God is "perfected in us," when it gets its way with us, or accomplishes its object in us; that object being the entire renovation of our nature; or, in other words, the fulfilment of the command, "Be ye holy, for I am holy;" "Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." 1 Pet. i. 14—16; Matt v. 48.

(a) Now what has *reason*, which is one form of our consciousness, to say for or against this evangelical theory of things divine and human? Granted the first elements of Natural Religion; granted that there is a God, and that He made us, and that He is a good and beneficent being,—and then it is certainly not unreasonable to believe that He cares for, and takes an interest in, and would do much to benefit, his human creation. Granted, also, that man is made in the moral image of his Maker, as the first page of our Bible tells us he is; and that he stands by natural constitution, as the pages of St. John and St. Paul tell us,¹ in such a close relation to Christ the everlasting Word of God, that *He* is our Head, our Light, our Life; and then it is certainly not unreasonable to believe that the Son of God became a man, in order to seek and to save us his lost ones. The love that could stoop so low to save, must indeed be vast. But there is nothing contrary to reason in its action.

(b) Reason, then, has nothing to say against the Scriptural account of the Incarnation. Nay, we may go further and say, that reason not only yields this bare assent, but finds in the knowledge of God in Christ a profound satisfaction. The

¹ John i. 4, 9, viii. 12; 1 Cor. xi. 3; Col. i. 16, 17.

consideration of this, however, will fall more conveniently under that department of our subject, which we shall come to, God willing, on Sunday next. I need hardly pause to point out to you the complete and absolute satisfaction, which the *heart* of man, or the seat of his affections, receives in the Gospel of Christ. The "light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" reveals a Person, whom we feel we can never sufficiently admire, reverence, and love; whose debtors, on the score of love, we must always be; and of whom we can only say, "We love Him, because we cannot help loving Him; because He is supremely worthy of our love; and because He first loved us."¹

(c) Turn we now to the conscience or moral sense. The conscience, or sense of right and wrong, has been sorely taxed and tried, indeed grievously tormented, by those human theories of atonement and endless misery, about which I spoke to you last Sunday. But to the pure Word of God, undiluted by human admixtures, it yields a deep response. As soon as the Cross of Christ is discerned to be the hand of God, put forth from behind the veil into the very fire, to snatch men from their sin and their misery, the conscience of

¹ 1 John iv. 19.

man utters its Amen to the Divine righteousness, as profoundly as the heart of man to the Divine love. It assents with trembling awe to the absolute condemnation of sin involved in that tremendous act. It sees in it a pledge of God's everlasting hatred of sin and wrath against it, and of his resolution to punish, uproot, and exterminate it. It flees by timely repentance from that coming wrath; yielding itself up to the Divine will with the prayer, "Search me, O God, and try the ground of my heart; prove me and examine my thoughts; look well, if there be any way of wickedness in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."¹

(d) Let us turn, last of all, to the soul, or that side of our human consciousness by which we deal most directly with God. If there is one thing for which the soul of man thirsts and longs, it is for the *Father*. The cry of the disciple to Jesus, "Shew us the *Father*, and it sufficeth us,"² is the instinctive cry of the human soul always and everywhere; just as, also, the word "*shew*" expresses the natural impatience of the flesh, and its rebellion against that walking by faith and not by sight, to which we are called. The Gospel of Christ, revealing as it does the Fatherliness of

¹ Psalm cxxxix. 23, 24.

² John xiv. 8.

God the righteous Father, is the one all-satisfying answer to this cry. In the strength of his perfect knowledge of the Father, and his consequent ability to reveal the Father, Jesus can say, as none else can, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."¹ "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father."²

And the more the soul is awakened to understand its actual state, and to feel its true needs; the more does it find those needs supplied in Jesus Christ. It is of this entire correspondence between the wants of the soul and the riches of Christ, that St. John is speaking in the chapter from which our text is taken. "This is he," so he writes, "that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear witness,"—I omit, of course, the interpolated words,—“the spirit and the water and the blood: and these three agree in one.” The soul or spirit of man, quickened by the eternal Spirit of God, becomes increasingly sensible of its need of cleansing, of peace, of life. He who came by water, came certainly to cleanse. He who

¹ Matt. xi. 27, 28. Mark the connection between the two verses.

² John xiv. 9.

came not by water only, but by water and blood, came certainly also to reconcile and to give life. The blood and the water which flowed from the pierced side of Jesus after his death, seemed to the eye of St. John a most expressive symbol of his work. He came to cleanse men from their sins. He came to impart to them a new life. For, remember, the blood is the life.¹ He came to reconcile them, thus cleansed and quickened, to God. We need this divine-human priest,—*not* to alter the mind of God towards us, still less to be punished in our stead;—those are thoughts bred of heathen darkness and not of Gospel light;—*but* to lead us up, as our living Way and Guide, to the Father, and to give us “boldness to enter into the holiest.”

Thus “believing on the Son of God,” we have, as St. John says, “the witness in ourselves.” There is a sense of peace and freedom and light; a purging of the conscience “from dead works to serve the living God;”² a power to strive against sin, to resist temptation, to love God and man, to walk as children of light; an inward fruitfulness and spiritual productiveness; which show that the soil and the seed have indeed come together, and that the seed of the Word, which can effect such

¹ Gen. ix. 4; Lev. xvii. 11, 14; Deut. xii. 23.

² John xiv. 6; Heb. x. 19.

³ Heb. ix. 14.

results in such a soil, must indeed be good and true.

Thus do reason and soul, heart and conscience, respond to the message of the Gospel. I have not striven after any metaphysical exactness in this analysis of human consciousness, but have aimed only at presenting the subject to you in the simplest and homeliest way, in order that you may verify it more easily for yourselves. Do so, I beseech you, my brethren. Let the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts.

3. The perfect correspondence between the needs of man and the Gospel of God is frankly admitted by some, who would explain it by the strange supposition that the Gospel is, not God's own authentic answer to the dumb cry of humanity, but the effort of humanity to answer its own cry. And, again, there are others, who slight and disparage and even deny those definite facts which by the first preachers of the Gospel were most firmly believed, while they profess the highest respect for Christianity in the abstract, as unquestionably the best and noblest form of human belief and human worship.

But if the Gospel of Jesus Christ be only the *echo* of the sorrowful wail of an orphan humanity, and not an authentic answer to that wail, it ceases to be any satisfaction of our wants at all.

In that case, it is a mere illusion,—the deceptive appearance of water, cheating, not assuaging, the thirst¹ of the soul. The heavens are still sealed, and the kingdom of God has not come nigh unto us. But indeed reason itself rebels against such a theory, as much as the soul revolts from it. For how is it conceivable, that a parcel of ignorant fishermen, such as the first preachers of Christianity unquestionably were, should have been able to invent a message, so grand in its conception, so magnificent in its results,—soaring so high above the scope not merely of ordinary intelligence, but of the profoundest and most ideal philosophy?

And as to those definite facts, which some would fain get rid of, while they retain a thing called Christianity, they are in truth so deeply imbedded in the structure of the Gospel, that to tear them out is to tear the Gospel itself to pieces. The whole matter resolves itself still to this day into these two simple questions: “Did Jesus rise from the dead?” and, “Is He the Son of God?” To answer these clearly and distinctly, heartily and spiritually, in the affirmative, is to be a Christian. To answer them in the negative is to pass the knife through the one sustaining stem, by which all the branches and leaves, flower and fruit, live.

¹ John vii. 37.

Yet there is a lesson to be learned from such theorists and such speculations, which we, whose cry surely is, "Lord, increase our faith;" "Lord, we believe; help thou our unbelief;"¹ would do well to lay to heart. The "knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" is the highest and the noblest knowledge that is as yet attainable by us. It is too much our habit to follow Christ for the loaves and fishes,—to follow Him for the sake of peace here and glory hereafter,—to follow Him, in order that we may escape hell and gain heaven. Let us learn to follow Him in future, less for the sake of what He gives, and more for the sake of what He is. He is the best, the highest, the noblest. To be more like Him is the grandest human ambition,—a prize above the loftiest, yet open and accessible to the lowest. One of our own poets has said—

"We needs must love the highest when we see it."

The best evidence for the truth of Christianity is Christ Himself. *If* the world can shew us a higher than Christ, we will love and follow *that* instead of Christ. But, as it is, since the world never could and never can shew us a higher, we, for our part, will cast in our lot, for good and for evil, for sorrow and for joy, for time and for

¹ Luke xvii. 5; Mark ix. 24.

eternity, here. In the darkest hours of doubt and disappointment, this is a stay of the soul which can never fail us. In the roughest storms this anchor holds. Even earth justifies this choice. Heaven will crown it with glory.

SERMON III.

EXTERNAL EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY.

Third Sunday in Advent.

Dec. 11th, 1864.

ACTS I. 3.

To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

WE have now ascertained what Christianity is according to the earliest conception of it: and we have shewn how, so conceived of, it commends itself with extraordinary power to the heart and soul, the reason and conscience of man. And in doing this, we have assumed nothing as to the nature of the Bible, beyond what all are prepared to admit. Our subject this afternoon is the External Evidences of Christianity.

The whole fabric of our Christian faith rests, as we have already seen, upon two propositions; namely, first, that Jesus rose from the dead;

and, secondly, that He is the Son of God. The first of these two propositions describes a plain fact, capable of direct proof. The second describes an inferred fact, not capable of direct, but only of indirect, proof. The external evidences, of which Christianity is susceptible, are in consequence partly historical and partly scientific and philosophical. My meaning will explain itself, as we proceed.

1. The direct evidence for the fact of the Resurrection is the testimony of the disciples themselves. There is no doubt whatever that the disciples of Jesus believed and affirmed, that their Master, having been crucified, having died on the cross, and having been buried, did actually rise again from the dead, appear to them several times, and at last ascend before their very eyes into heaven. The profound conviction of the early church on this subject is expressed very forcibly and tersely in the words of our text: "He shewed himself to them,"—that is, "to the apostles whom he had chosen,"—"alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." The evidence on which those who saw him "alive after his passion" relied to identify him with the man whose crucifixion

they had watched, was twofold. They saw him at intervals during those forty days, and traced the very marks of the cross upon his hands and feet. And they heard him speak again about that great subject of the kingdom of God, about which he had so often spoken to them before his death. The proofs were to their minds conclusive, or as St. Luke calls them "infallible." They bore witness, in consequence, to the resurrection of Jesus, as a fact, about which there could be neither doubt nor mistake. It was the principal part of their mission, they felt, to bear this witness.

And this testimony of theirs exposed them to persecution, suffering, and death; yet still they persisted in it. Attention has often been drawn, and very justly, to the great difference that there is between bearing witness to a *fact*, and bearing witness to an *opinion*,—between the willingness to die for a fact, and the willingness to die for an opinion. Every religion, it is urged, however false, has had its martyrs and confessors. The mere willingness to die for an opinion does not prove that the opinion is a true one. It only proves the sincerity and strength of the conviction with which it is held. The first martyrs and confessors of the Christian faith, be it remembered,

were content to die in attestation of certain simple facts, and specially of one signal and all-inclusive fact,—proved to them by the evidence of their senses of seeing and hearing. “That which we have seen and heard,” writes St. John, “declare we unto you.”¹ That they were sincere in that conviction of theirs, there can be no doubt. Either it was, as they said it was; or they were *mistaken*. Wilful deceivers they certainly were not. Is it *likely*, is it *possible*, that they could have been labouring under a mistake?

2. Leaving this elementary point of Christian evidences, we pass to a wider field. We have a multitude of facts—undoubted and indubitable facts—to account for; and the question is, Can we account for them on any other supposition than that of the superhuman, or, let us say, the Divine nature of the Founder of Christianity, Jesus Christ? In this view the problem assumes a thoroughly scientific shape.

(a) We have, for example, first of all, the manifest fact of our actual Christendom. Christendom, with all that is implied in the word, is an effect; the causes of which may be traced back, step by step, along the course of history, until we arrive at the life and death of Jesus of Nazareth. It was

¹ 1 John i. 1—3.

he who set all those great causes in movement which have produced the grand effects which we see around us. It is not too much to say that all that is best in human society at the present moment is due to him; due to the operation of principles which are confessedly Christian principles, and of virtues which are recognised as distinctively Christian virtues.

(*b*) And when we come to analyse the general fact of Christendom, past and present, into some of its component elements, the lesser facts which reveal themselves and which require explanation are very striking. Of such facts, included in the general fact of Christendom, let me invite your attention briefly to three: the Christian Scriptures, the lives of eminent saints, and the two Sacraments admitted as such by the universal Christian Church.

i. Apart from any question of inspiration, the Christian Scriptures are undoubtedly a genuine product of Christianity,—a fruit of the life which animated the Christian Church of the earliest times. What sublime and noble writings they are! how pure in morals, how lofty in tone, how exquisite in their exhibition of the character of Jesus! But they are steeped, from the first page of them to the last, in the conviction that Jesus

rose from the dead and is the Son of God. This conviction is the root of all their grandeur and beauty, their very life and soul,

ii. Again, Christianity has produced in every age, since the Christian Church first drew breath down to the present time, its heroes; men who, like St. Paul, have been content to "suffer the loss of all things"¹ for the sake of Christ and out of love to him; men who, like their Master himself, have been willing, and more than willing, to "deny themselves and take up the cross daily and follow him." They have regarded their great Master under many different aspects. To some he has been the Saviour, the Healer, the Restorer, the Redeemer from sin and wrath and death. To others he has been the King of men, the Lord and Life and Light of every heart. To others he has been the Bridegroom of the soul, the Bridegroom of Humanity. But to all he has been "the Christ, the Son of the living God."² All their excellence, all their grace and virtue, all their holiness, self-devotion, and courage, all that has won them first the world's hatred and afterwards even the world's applause, has been due to their faith in Jesus the Son of God; has been rooted in *that*, nourished, strengthened, and sustained by *that*. It is this

¹ Phil. iii. 7, 8.

² Matt. xvi. 16; John xx. 31.

faith that has made them true heroes and sons of God, according to those words of St. John, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God:"¹ "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God."²

iii. Again, the two great Sacraments of the Church, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, ordinances so simple yet so replete with meaning, present to the scientific enquirer a remarkable phenomenon, which no view of Jesus, short of the Christian view, seems adequate to explain. That they had their origin in the direct command of Jesus, it is impossible to doubt. Those who try to account for them on any other hypothesis than that of the Divine humanity of their Author, are driven to strange shifts and evasions in the attempt.³ These sacraments, we may say, are our sole direct link with the historical Jesus. Every time, for example, that a Christian congregation meets at the Lord's table, they are adding another link to a chain, the first link of which is held by the hand of Jesus himself in that upper chamber at Jerusalem, the night before he suffered. We hear him saying, "This do in remembrance of me:"

¹ 1 John v. 1.

² 1 John iv. 15.

³ See, for example, Renan's "Vie de Jésus," chap. xviii.

"This is my blood of the new testament:" "This is my body which is given for you." Even the first of these sayings is almost profane, if the lips that spoke it were the lips of a mere man. Even in *it* the humanity is deeply tinged with divinity: in the last the human is well-nigh swallowed up by the divine.

(c) The scientific problem presented by all these facts or phenomena,—Christendom itself, regarded as a whole, the Christian Scriptures, the Christian life, the Christian sacraments,—is just this—How to account for, or explain them? The Christian theory of the Divine humanity of Jesus does explain them. Every other theory, every theory which represents Jesus as a mere man, and resolves the Christian view into "fable, myth, or personification," not only fails to account for the facts, but also involves us in the most frightful moral confusions and perplexities. For the highest glories of human nature must then be traced to a lie as their source.

It is no real objection to the Christian theory to urge that the union of the Divine with the Human in Jesus is in itself inexplicable. All that scientific reason can require is, that the theory shall be adequate to explain the facts, and that no other conceivable theory can explain them. The

highest laws and generalizations of positive science are often in themselves inexplicable. Yet if the facts point clearly to them, and find their only adequate explanation in them, they are not on that account rejected. The law of gravitation and the undulatory theory of light are examples in point. On the supposition of a certain force, measured by a certain formula, residing in every particle of matter, all the phenomena of the heavenly bodies and of terrestrial gravity can be satisfactorily accounted for and predicted. But the force itself, thus proved and measured, is in itself inexplicable and mysterious.¹ Of the undulatory theory of light it may be said, that the supposed undulations or vibrations, by which all the curious phenomena of light can be most satisfactorily represented and explained, are in themselves not only inexplicable, but even unimaginable. We cannot present them to our minds; so infinitesimal are they in magnitude, so inconceivably rapid in their propagation. Yet we do not on that account feel justified in repudiating the theory.

3. But the phenomena, of which the Christian

¹ Thus Sir John Herschel, in an article on "The Sun" in "Good Words," speaks of "that mystery of mysteries, gravitation;" and describes it as acting "in some mysterious way which the human mind is utterly incapable of comprehending."—"Good Words," vol. iv. pp. 275, 276.

theory is the only adequate explanation, are not limited to the sphere and time of Christendom. The life of Jesus Christ has had and still has its vast effects: but it had also its long and large preparations, and its silent but extensive preliminaries. "*When the fulness of the time was come,*"¹ St Paul writes, "God sent forth his Son." These preliminaries, as well as those effects, find their only satisfactory resolution in the belief that Jesus is the Son of God.

(a) Our remarks on this part of our subject will fall naturally under two heads, according as our attention is turned to the Gentile, or to the Jewish world. Under the first head it is, to say the least, curious and significant to notice the firm hold which the conception of an incarnation of the Deity has had upon the minds of men. Turn to the east or to the west, in east and west alike you find it. Greek art and Greek poetry drew half their glory and their inspiration from it. Philosophers might argue against it,—might endeavour to shew that it was an incredible supposition that God should change himself into a man.² It was well that they should argue against it; so gross, corrupt, and monstrous often was the shape which the conception assumed. But still

¹ Gal. iv. 4.

² Plato's "*Republic*," Book II. 380, 381.

the thought remained. No force of argument could uproot it; no fire of sarcasm wither it. When "the fulness of the time was come," He who is "the Desire of all nations"¹ would justify the latent truth, while He stripped off and discarded the wrappings of superstition and falsehood, which disfigured and debased it.

Still more instructive and remarkable is it to notice how the ancient philosophy or search after wisdom had all but worn itself out, ere the true wisdom of God² was come. The only philosophy in which minds cast in a noble mould could take refuge, was the cold, joyless, repellent philosophy of the Stoic school. In the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius we see what Stoicism could do for a naturally noble mind, and also what it could not do. "It is more delightful," says the great German historian of Rome, "to speak of M. Aurelius than of any one else, for if there is any sublime human virtue, it is his. He was certainly the noblest character of his time, and I know no other man who combined such an unaffected kindness, mildness, and humility with such a conscientiousness and severity towards himself. We know him in his mature age from his own *Meditations*, a golden book. There are things in that

¹ Hagg. ii. 7.

² 1 Cor. i. 24, 30.

work which no one can read without deep grief, for there we find this purest of men without happiness and joy."¹ Of the many rays of truth, wisdom, and moral excellence, which we find in the ancient philosophies, there is not one which has not been caught up and glorified in Christianity, and which does not find its source in Him who has always been "the true Light which lighteth every man." "The light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" has received all these faint scattered rays into its own self,—harmonizing all, displacing and disowning none.

(b) The preparation of the Jewish world for the coming of the Christ is, of course, more obvious and striking than that of the Gentile world. The history of that remarkable people, their vehement expectation of the Messiah, their solemn, national rejection of Jesus, and the obliteration of their polity in blood and fire which supervened so speedily upon that rejection,—all these facts, which embrace so many others, point strongly to the Christian conclusion that Jesus is the Christ. I do not intend to include in this brief summary any controverted questions as to the credibility of the

¹ Niebuhr's Lectures on the History of Rome, Vol. II. Lect. LXX. pp. 277—279.

early Jewish history, or the actual amount of genuine Messianic prophecy contained in the Scriptures of the Old Testament. The argument gains, certainly, greatly in force,—it becomes indeed absolutely conclusive,—if the history contained in the Pentateuch be admitted to be substantially true; and if the interpretations of the ancient Scriptures, that were recognised by the Apostles and Evangelists of the primitive Church, be confessed to be, in the main, sound and just. But even without this, the evidence presented by the unquestioned facts of Jewish history and Jewish thought is strongly corroborative of the great truth already reached,—that Jesus is the Son of God.

4. Thus does one line of inductive argument after another spring up and support its predecessors, until we attain that cumulation of evidence, that *consilience* of inductions, which is held by our best logicians to be one of the most satisfactory tests of truth.¹ But we have still another branch of our subject to pursue,—a branch which is profoundly interesting, and which is philosophical, rather than, strictly speaking, scientific.

We have already seen that Christianity is, above all things, *light*,—revelation,—the unveiling

¹ Whewell's "Phil. of the Ind. Sci." Book XI. chap. v. sect.

3. Mill's "Logic," Book III. chap. IV. sect. 3.

or manifestation of that which was obscure or hidden; light upon the nature, or, in Scriptural phraseology, the Name¹ of God, and light also upon the nature and constitution of man. And in this very notion of *light* there is involved, of course, all that illuminating, purifying, quickening power, which is so characteristic of the subtle, mysterious thing, which we call "light" in the physical or material world.

(a) This divine light, when turned upon the nature of man, shews him to be a spiritual being, created to stand in close and intimate relations with his Creator. By physical constitution man is only the head and crown of the animal creation, the highest grade in an ascending scale or series, which reaches down to a point where the animal life passes into the vegetable. The real, essential difference between man and the highest brutes lies not in his physical organization, but in his spiritual constitution, as a being so made as to be capable of receiving the signature, stamp, and impress of the moral likeness of his Maker. This spiritual constitution is described more fully by St. John and St. Paul as implying the closest possible relation to Christ, the everlasting Word of God and Light of men. Such a relation must,

¹ Exod. xxxiii. 19, xxxiv. 5—7; Psalm xxv. 11.

from its very nature, be mysterious and undefinable. But though mysterious and undefinable itself, it enables us to understand and account for many facts of human nature, life, and consciousness, which are otherwise wholly unintelligible and unaccountable. Thus, it enables us to understand the phenomena of the conscience and the soul; the aspirations and cravings of the latter, the authority and urgency with which the former speaks. It enables us also to understand and to trace to a common source, all that dim and dumb *feeling* after God, which has been characteristic of men from the earliest time¹ to the latest,—as well as all those glimpses of truth and beauty and moral excellence, which visited and ennobled the hearts of the sages and great men of heathen Greece and Rome. It enables us also to understand how this everlasting Word of God,—“in whom and by whom and unto whom all things were created,” and “in whom all things consist,”²—could in due

¹ Lyell's “Antiquity of Man,” chap. x. pp. 192, 193. “We have at last succeeded in tracing back the sacred rites of burial, and, more interesting still, a belief in a future state, to times long anterior to those of history and tradition.”

² Col. i. 16, 17. The force of this passage is sadly lost in our English version. Render it: “For in him were created all things that are in the heavens and that are upon the earth, the visible things and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created by him

season "become flesh and dwell amongst men,"¹ and how, having thus become for a few years *a* son of man, as He is ever *The Son of Man*, He could take the burden of all our sins upon Himself,—come under the crushing, condemning sense of them,—be the propitiation for them,—and make us partakers of that propitiation.²

and unto him ; and he is before all, and all things in him consist." The words "in him" not only throw a strong and steady light upon the spiritual constitution of man, but also preclude (just as the first chapter of the Book of Genesis does) that dead mechanical view of nature, into which it is so hard not to fall.

¹ John i. 14.

² Phil. iii. 10. See "Sermons on Sacrifice and Propitiation," pp. 122—126. Whatever *that* is in Christ, which enables him to satisfy the demand of God's righteousness in relation to sin, and thus constitutes him "the propitiation for our sins" (1 John ii. 2),—of *that*, we may be confident, he would by his Spirit make us partakers. Therefore St. Paul longs to know "the fellowship of his sufferings," and to be made "conformable unto his death" (Phil. iii. 10);—and he himself bids us "drink his blood" (John vi. 53—56).

The simple fact of the Son of God being placed as a man amongst men, involves at once all the Scriptural elements of his propitiation. As the perfect Man, the true Brother of men, he must *feel* and bear their sins; they must be "laid upon him;" they must be a "sore burden" to him; he must plead with God in relation to them,—as in the prayer on the cross, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." And in the same moment, as the Divine Son, he cannot but condemn those sins and hate them with a condemnation and a hatred which are the perfect reflection of, and the exact response to, God's own condemnation and hatred. Of this sense of

(b) And this Divine Word, in whom creation stands, and who is called the *Word* of God, because He utters the thoughts and the will of God, first by creation, and afterwards by redemption,—is also “the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father.”¹ The ultimate facts which the light of the Gospel, when turned upon the Divine nature, discloses, are the *oneness* of the Son with the Father, and the *procession* of the Spirit from the Son and the Father,—that Spirit

“Which, moving o’er the spirit of man, unblinds
His eye and bids him look.”

It did not need the Gospel to teach us that there is a supreme, sovereign, omnipotent Will, upon which all things depend. But it *did* need the Gospel to shew us, and it is the glory of the Gospel that it *does* shew us, that this Sovereign Will has nothing arbitrary, despotic, or self-centred in it,—but is a Will into which love enters as an essential constituent,—the Will of the Father and the Son, blended together in abiding indissoluble union which not even the Cross could break.² And, again, it *did* need the Gospel to shew us, and it is the glory of the Gospel that it *does* sin and this righteous condemnation of sin he invites us to be made partakers. They are the two permanent elements in all true repentance.

¹ John i. 18.

² Phil. ii. 8.

shew us, that this Sovereign Will, so constituted by the union of the Father and the Son, does not stand aloof from our poor sin-laden, sorrow-smitten humanity, but is seeking it with the *proceeding* Spirit, in order to illuminate and regenerate it.¹ The highest glory of God is reached when, in the light of the Gospel of Christ, we listen to the words of Jesus: "I and my Father are one:"² "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth."³

(c) And, in the hearty acceptance of these blessed truths as to the nature of God and the constitution of man, there springs up within us an inextinguishable hope for our race. We look back into the past; and, far as the eye can reach

¹ It is most necessary to remember, that, in the words of our Creeds, "Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son;" "The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son: neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding;" the all-important truth for us is, that the Spirit of God does *proceed*, or come forth, from God, in order to act upon and renew the hearts of men. The ecclesiastical controversies that have arisen out of the words, "And the Son," are as nothing by comparison with this unquestioned truth; except in so far as they turn upon the vital point, that the Spirit who proceeds, is the Spirit of God Himself, and that each individual soul is thus brought into direct communication with its Maker, Father, and Redeemer, without the intervention of any human priest or mediator whatsoever.

² John x. 30.

³ John xiv. 16, 17.

by the light either of revelation or of science, we see traces of a gradual, ordered progress, in which God is discerned to be ever lifting man upwards into knowledge and life. We look forwards into the future; and, amidst all its dimness and darkness, we cannot help listening to the words of Jesus, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me;"¹ and to the words of St. Paul, "When all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."² We do not venture to surmise or theorize as to "the times and seasons," the methods and processes, the long ages of waiting and preparation, struggling and suffering, through which that glorious consummation is to be attained. As to all this, we can be well content that "one day" should be "with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." The "times of refreshing" and "restitution of all things," of judgment and redemption and regenera-

¹ John xii. 32.

² 1 Cor. xv. 28. It is well worthy of notice that the same word is used in the original, both of the subjection of all things to the Son, and of the subjection of the Son to the Father. "When all things shall have been *subjected* unto him, then shall the Son also himself be *subject* unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."

tion, will come at last "from the presence of the Lord;" and all will be well. And for ourselves,—if we are indeed looking, as prophets and apostles have looked before us, "for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness," we shall "be diligent that we may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless."¹

5. I said last Sunday that I must reserve for to-day the consideration of the positive satisfaction which reason finds in the knowledge of God in Christ. I trust that I have now made it plain to you that the scientific reason acquiesces, while the philosophic reason² profoundly rejoices, "in the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," and in the faith that Jesus is

¹ 2 Pet. iii. 8, 13, 14; Acts iii. 19—21; Matt xix. 28.

² By the "scientific reason" I mean, reason acting according to the recognised rules and conditions of Physical Science,—examining, classifying, and interpreting phenomena. By the "philosophic reason" I mean, reason prosecuting its researches, as it cannot refrain from doing, below phenomena, into the hidden sources, foundations, and ultimate causes of things. If Christianity is to satisfy man,—if it is to be a *Gospel* to him,—it must, in some sense, be a *Philosophy* also. And so it is: it is the highest, noblest, grandest Philosophy that was ever given to the world. "Howbeit," so St. Paul writes (1 Cor. ii. 6, 7), "we speak wisdom among them that are perfect; yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, who are coming to nought; but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the wisdom which hath been hidden."

the Son of God. I have been compelled to compress the argument into a very narrow compass, and often to suggest by a single word or phrase much which it was impossible, within the limits of a single sermon, to elucidate or enlarge upon. I would that I could convey to your minds the deep impression, which the line of thought pursued in this and the preceding discourse has made upon my own,—and the comfort, confidence, and peace which I have for many years found in it. Christianity, depend upon it, dear brethren, is no “cunningly devised fable,”¹ but the most solid, sober, and glorious truth; truth echoed by the conscience, dear to the heart, unspeakably precious to the soul, and finding in the highest exercise of reason no whisper of contradiction, but, on the contrary, a delighted welcome.

Why, we sometimes ask,—why, being what it is, has it not produced even greater results, both in man’s heart and the world’s history, than it actually has? Being the Divine thing it is,—being, indeed, the very Light of God,—why has it not illuminated long since the dark places of the earth, and realised the prophetic announcement, “The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters

¹ 2 Pet. i. 16.

cover the sea?"¹ Why are there still so many who make no profession of Christianity; and many more, whose lives do no honour to the faith which they profess? Why is the evangelization of the world almost, if not quite, at a standstill; and why are masses of practical heathenism found festering even in the heart of countries nominally Christian?

It is well that we should ask ourselves such questions. It is well that we should task ourselves, if possible, to answer them. The answer must partly be found in St. Paul's words, "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, so that they do not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."² But it must also be frankly admitted, that in these times and in many other times, there is not and there has not been that "manifestation of the truth" which would leave the unbelieving mind without excuse. Modern Christianity has departed widely from its prototype and genuine apostolical pattern, and has encumbered itself with many a weight, which hinders it grievously in running the race set before it. Even shorn as it is of more than half its glory, it has yet produced fruits of untold and inestimable

¹ Hab. ii. 14.

² 2 Cor. iv. 4.

good. Were it withdrawn from the earth, darkness, inconceivably gross, would be the result. It carries, too, in its own bosom,—in the Holy Scriptures, in the ancient Creeds, but above all in the ever-present Spirit of Truth,—the possibility of its purification and renewal. Did it but shine forth, as one day it surely will, in its own pristine and native glory,—neither dulled by the intellects, nor dimmed by the strifes, of men,—it would prove itself universally to be, what all who will may see and find it to be, at once “the power of God,” and “the wisdom of God.”¹

Are there any here, whose hearts beat in full response to the message, but who cannot help saying to themselves, “Yes, but it is too good to be true?” Ah, no, my friends! Let us rather say, “Being so good, it must be worthy of the Infinite Good; of Him, in whom all truth and goodness dwell, and from whom they ever proceed.” Trust yourselves, I beseech you, in full confidence to the blessedness which it holds out. The broad ocean of its truth and its love will well sustain the swimmer, who will commit himself fearlessly to it. He will find it, even in this life, to be “righteousness and peace and joy.” At last, it will bring him to the haven, where he would be.

¹ 1 Cor. i. 24.

NOTE ON SERMON III.

THE VERIFICATION OF CHRISTIANITY.

I HAVE endeavoured in the preceding Sermon to exhibit, to a certain extent, the correspondence between the nature of the evidence for the truths of Physical Science and the nature of the evidence for the great fundamental truths of vital Christianity. There is one point in this correspondence, which I would fain set in a clearer light, before I pass on to a different subject.

In Physical Science, as is well known, each newly-discovered truth has to undergo a process of verification. Will it account for,—will it enable us to predict,—any new facts? Assuming its correctness, and acting upon it, can we advance to any further truths? Does it stand the test of actual use and repeated application? If so,—if it does this,—then it becomes, day by day, more and more firmly rooted in the confidence of scientific men. It is no longer held dubiously and tentatively. It is no longer, as it were, on its trial. It becomes one of the fixed landmarks and acknowledged possessions of science.

Analogous to this process so familiar to the student of Physical Science, is that process by which those great truths of the Gospel, which have been discussed in the preceding Sermons, become

rooted in our confidence and our affections,—fast locked in the grasp of the heart, as well as of the head. By all means let them be put on their trial. By all means let it be seen whether they will stand the test of action, or not. Do they help us to live our lives according to the dictates of conscience and reason, or do they not? Do they help us to understand ourselves and the world around us, or do they not? When faithfully and diligently acted upon, do we find peace and strength in them, or do we not?

This verification of Christianity falls, it will be seen, under two heads. There is the inward *personal* spiritual verification, which consists, above all things, in the feeling of being *in light*, and to which apply such words as these of the Psalmist, speaking of a lower, yet cognate, revelation; “With thee is the fountain of life: *in thy light shall we see light*.”¹ and these of St. Peter; “That ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you *out of darkness into his marvellous light*.”² And there is also the calm, philosophic verification, of which reason and the moral sense are the instruments. “By their fruits ye shall know them.” The fruits of a genuine and hearty acceptance of the Gospel of Christ are such as no one can deny to be altogether good and excellent. St. Paul says: “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.”³ And St. James says: “The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality,

¹ Psalm xxxvi. 10. ² 1 Pet. ii. 9. ³ Gal. v. 22, 23.

and without hypocrisy.”¹ What must the tree be, whose produce can be thus described?

In this verification of Christianity, it matters not what be the foundation upon which we construct our system of morals,—whether purely utilitarian,² or strictly transcendental.³ The Ethics of Christianity will stand every conceivable test. But the glory of Christianity is, that it not only furnishes the noblest possible standard of morals, but furnishes also the motive power and inspiring energy needful for its realization. Not only does it proclaim: “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”⁴ It also announces One who can “baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire.”⁵

¹ James iii. 17.

² “In the golden rule of Jesus of Nazareth, we read the complete spirit of the ethics of utility. To do as you would be done by, and to love your neighbour as yourself, constitute the ideal perfection of utilitarian morality.”—J. S. Mill’s “Utilitarianism,” pp. 24, 25.

³ “Well did the wisest of our time write: ‘It is only with renunciation, that life, properly speaking, can be said to begin.’” “There is in man a Higher than love of happiness: he can do without happiness, and instead thereof find blessedness.”—Carlyle’s “Sartor Resartus,” book II., chap. ix., pp. 207, 208. What is this but a modern version of the words of Jesus, in which the highest morality of the Gospel is contained: “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.”—Matt. xvi. 24, 25: compare John xii. 24—26.

⁴ Matt. v. 8.

⁵ Matt. iii. 11. John i. 33.

SERMON IV.

THE BIBLE.

Fourth Sunday in Advent.

Dec. 18th, 1864.

2 COR. III. 6.

Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament ;
not of the letter, but of the spirit : for the letter killeth, but
the spirit giveth life.

Or, more exactly,

Who also made us able ministers of a new covenant, not of
writing, but of spirit; for the writing killeth, but the spirit
quickeneth.

IN the first of this series of discourses, of which this is the last, I pointed out to you, that the question, "What is the Bible?" is not the primary and fundamental question of our Christian faith, but a secondary and subsequent one. This is often forgotten at the present day; and we see men, on every side of us, building their faith on the proved or the assumed infallibility of the Bible, and crying out that to impeach the accuracy of a

single line or word of the Bible is to rob them of their dearest hopes and consolations. To do this is really to invert the pyramid and to endeavour to balance it upon its apex, instead of allowing it to stand firmly and solidly upon its base. However skilfully it be balanced, the position is still, to the last, one of unstable equilibrium; and a passing breath of doubt as to the absolute correctness of a single statement of the Scriptures is enough to bring the whole fabric toppling down.

The object of these discourses has been to shew you that the truth of Christianity is quite unaffected by any view that may be taken of the fallibility or infallibility, the accuracy or inaccuracy, of the Bible. We have asked first, "What is the Gospel?" Then, "Does it commend itself, by its own inherent light, power, and glory, to the conscience and soul of man?" Then, "Have we good reason to believe that it is true, and that we may therefore trust ourselves unhesitatingly to the joy of it?" Having answered all these questions, we come last of all to the inquiry, "And what is the Bible?"

In presenting our great subject to you in this order, I am only following the guidance of the formularies of the Church, of which I am a minister. Those who would reverse this true and natural

order, and who would start from, or, more exactly, would *posit*, the Bible as the basis of their faith, are really departing not only from the precedent of the Apostolical times,¹ but also from the principles of our own reformed Church of England. They are in fact adopting quite unconsciously the principles of another Church, very different from our own; and following the example of a school of theologians, very unlike our own greatest divines.²

¹ In addressing themselves to Jews and proselytes, the Apostles appealed, of course, to the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and shewed from them that Jesus is the Christ (Acts xvii. 2, 3). But in addressing themselves to the pagan world, their appeal was necessarily made in a very different way; to the consciences of their hearers; to the first principles of natural religion; but, above all, to the simple power of the message, of which they were the bearers (Acts xiv. 15—17, xvii. 22—31, xxiv. 25; 1 Thess. ii. 13). Occasionally they were permitted to work miracles, in attestation or illustration of their message. But this was the exception rather than the rule, and sometimes, as at Lystra and Philippi, had the immediate effect of hindering their work and compelling them to seek a fresh audience.

The Gospel *first*, then the Bible; *this* is the logical order, the historical order, and, we may add also, the natural order. For, to this day, the mother *tells* the Gospel to her child; and the child learns to believe, with a child's faith, in Jesus the Son of God, long before he knows about, or can read in, the Book which bears witness of Him.

² "We all believe that the Scriptures of God are sacred, and that they have proceeded from God; ourselves we assure that we do right well in so believing. We have for this point a demonstration sound and infallible. But it is not the word of God

If you will be at the trouble of comparing the "Articles of Religion" of the Church of England with the Westminster Confession and the Larger Catechism, which are the accepted formularies of the Church of Scotland, you will see at once my reasons for saying this. The first chapter of the Westminster Confession is, "Of the Holy Scripture." The second is, "Of God, and of the Holy Trinity." The third is, "Of God's eternal decree." The Confession, you see, begins with the Bible; and goes from it to God; and

which doth or can possibly assure us that we do well to think it his word. For if any one book of Scripture did give testimony to all, yet still that Scripture which giveth credit to the rest would require another Scripture to give credit unto it, neither could we ever come unto any pause whereon to rest our assurance this way."—Hooker's "Ecol. Pol." II. iv. 2. "Scripture teacheth us that saving truth which God hath discovered unto the world by revelation, and it presumeth us taught otherwise that itself is divine and sacred."—Hooker's "Ecol. Pol." III. viii. 13. "Whatsoever is spoken of God or things appertaining to God otherwise than as the truth is; though it seem an honour, it is an injury. And as incredible praises given unto men do often abate and impair the credit of their deserved commendation; so we must likewise take great heed, lest in attributing unto Scripture more than it can have, the incredibility of that do cause even those things which indeed it hath most abundantly, to be less reverently esteemed."—Hooker's "Ecol. Pol." II. viii. 7. "When we say that all controversies of religion are decidable by the Scripture, it is manifest to all but cavillers, that we do and must except from this generality those which are touching the Scripture itself."—Chillingworth's "Rel. of Prot." I. ii. 27.

from thence to an imaginary decree of God, by which the numbers of the saved and of the lost respectively are from everlasting determined. The first Article of the Church of England, on the contrary, is, "Of faith in the Holy Trinity." The second is, "Of the Word, or Son of God, which was made very man." The third is, "Of the going down of Christ into hell." The fourth is, "Of the resurrection of Christ." The fifth is, "Of the Holy Ghost." Not till the sixth Article do we come to the subject of the Holy Scriptures. The Articles, you see, unlike the Confession, begin with God and the manifestation of God in Christ, and thence proceed to discuss the nature of the Bible, and to lay down the simple rule, that "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation."

It is also well worthy of remark, that, whereas the Larger Catechism, in reply to its third question, "What is the Word of God?" gives this answer: "The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the Word of God, the only rule of faith and obedience,"—thus rigidly declaring the Bible and the Word of God to be co-extensive and convertible terms; our own Church, on the contrary, has carefully refrained from assuming a position so unscriptural, so dangerous, so suicidal.

I call this position unscriptural, because in the Bible itself you will find the distinction carefully marked between the "Word" and the "Scripture"; the "Word" being, in the Old Testament, generally the inspiration by which the prophets spoke, and in the New Testament, almost always¹ either Christ himself or the Gospel message,—while the "Scripture" is the writing or written record which bears witness thereto. And I call it "dangerous," and even "suicidal," because, the moment we identify the Scripture with the Word of God, and say, "The Scripture is the Word of God, and the Word of God is the Scripture;" that very moment we yield ourselves up an easy prey to the sceptic and the infidel. The smallest discrepancy in the Bible, the slightest departure from scientific accuracy of expression, becomes then a weapon of offence against us, which it is impossible suc-

¹ In Luke iii. 2; Eph. v. 26, vi. 17, the "Word" (here *ῥῆμα*, not *λόγος*) is, I imagine, the inward utterance of the inspiring, sanctifying, guiding Spirit, by whom the Baptist spoke, who sanctifies the Church, and who is the Christian's sword. At any rate, it is not the Scripture.

Neither *ῥῆμα* nor *λόγος* is ever used, I believe, as equivalent to *γραφή*. The phrase *ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου* (1 Thess. iv. 15) is to be explained, I think, like 1 Cor. vii. 10, as referring to words of Jesus spoken during his lifetime. "In,"—that is, as included in and forming part of,—"the word of the Lord." I offer this view with some hesitation, but in the belief that it relieves the passage from much difficulty.

cessfully to resist without surrendering the very position, which we have thus falsely and needlessly assumed.

We come, then, this afternoon, without any embarrassment of ulterior consequences, in perfect freedom, candour, and openness of spirit, to the question, "What is the Bible?" Whatever the answer be, it cannot affect detrimentally the results already obtained. It cannot weaken the proofs of the truth of Christianity, already advanced; though possibly it may strengthen and confirm them.

The only legitimate and satisfactory way of answering this question is by an examination of the Bible itself, in order to ascertain by actual trial what it is.

1. Starting, then, from our own authorized English Version of the Holy Scriptures, we have to note, first of all, the fact, that it is a version, and not always a correct version, of certain Hebrew and Greek writings; these Hebrew and Greek writings being not the actual autographs of the sacred writers, but only copies, necessarily somewhat altered and therefore deteriorated by the process of continued copying. It is impossible to say what amount of change the Hebrew Scriptures, or the writings of the Old Testament, have undergone since the moment when they passed

out of the hands of the original authors. The mere copying, which the lapse of time and the wear and tear of constant use necessitate, involves a certain quantity of change, unless the copyists are preserved by a continual miracle from making mistakes. And, in the case at any rate of the oldest writings of the Old Testament, there has been, in addition to the alteration necessarily produced by repeated transcription, an amount of revision and recasting, which has tended still further to disguise the original documents. There are plain and palpable insertions in the text,—archæological notes introduced by some comparatively modern hand, which indicate a process of change, resulting not merely from the mechanical labour of the copyist, but from the additions and alterations of successive editors. You will find a clear example of this in Deut. ii. 9—13. “The Lord said unto me, Distress not the Moabites, neither contend with them in battle: for I will not give thee of their land for a possession; because I have given Ar unto the children of Lot for a possession.” Then follows in the 10th, 11th, and 12th verses an antiquarian note¹ about the Emims, Anakims,

¹ Strangely enough, Professor Kuenen regards this and similar transparent *glosses* upon the original text by a later hand, as “in a certain sense, indeed, glosses, but yet as pro-

and Horims, which interrupts the narrative and is clearly, as its language shews, the work of a later hand. And then the actual narrative is resumed in the 13th verse with the words, "Now rise up, and get you over the brook Zered. And we went over the brook Zered."

As to the Hebrew or Jewish Scriptures, I repeat, it is impossible at this distance of time to determine the precise amount of alteration, which they have undergone, since they came from the pens of the first composers. In the case of the Greek Scriptures,—the Scriptures of the New Testament, the Christian Scriptures,—the problem admits of at least an approximate solution. In their case we can state with some confidence, what the condition of the text was about three centuries after their first composition. Nearer than this we cannot get to the precise words written by the

ceeding from the author himself."—See "Kuenen on the Pentateuch," chap. xi., note 65 (Colenso's Translation). That the original writer should have stultified himself, and defeated his supposed object of passing his work off as the work of Moses, by inserting such glosses, is a strange and almost incredible idea. It is difficult to avoid the supposition, that the desire to maintain the theory of the late date of the entire Book of Deuteronomy, has had something to do with the adoption of so unnatural an hypothesis. These manifestly later glosses are a difficulty in the way of that theory, which must somehow be got rid of.

Apostles and Evangelists of Jesus Christ. During those three centuries their words must have undergone some amount of alteration.¹ It can hardly have been great; it may have been very trifling. But what the exact amount was, can, in the present state of our knowledge, only be matter of conjecture. Let us pause for a moment to reflect upon these facts, and consider to what inferences they lead us.

¹ The oldest MSS. in our possession omit John vii. 53—viii. 11. I speak with hesitation on a point of criticism confessedly so obscure and dubious; but I find it difficult to doubt that the passage is by the pen of St. John, and formed part of the original Gospel, standing where it now stands in our English Bible. The omission of the passage at some time earlier than our earliest MSS.; and its subsequent recovery and re-insertion, seem to explain the present curious state of the text. The passage itself supplies a needful link in the narrative: the last verse of Chap. vii., describing the termination of the Feast of Tabernacles, when the people who had been living in booths returned to their own houses, and the strangers left Jerusalem to return home; and the first verse of Chap. viii., describing how Jesus took up his residence at Bethany,—*there*, as 'one may well imagine, making that acquaintance with the household of Lazarus which is implied in the subsequent narrative, and *thence* making repeated visits to Jerusalem during the weeks which intervened between the Feast of Tabernacles (vii. 2) and the Feast of the Dedication (x. 22). With John viii. 1, compare Luke xxi. 37, and Matt. xxi. 17, to shew that "going to the Mount of Olives" is equivalent to taking up his residence in Bethany.

If this be so, we have clear proof that our oldest MSS. do not represent with absolute correctness the original writings of the Apostles.

(a) Amongst some Christian people of the present day, there is a theory of what is called "the *verbal* inspiration" of the Bible ; by which, I presume, it is meant, that the very words of Holy Writ were dictated, or in some way supernaturally communicated to the authors. The simple facts just mentioned seem to me to oppose an insuperable obstacle to the reception of such a theory. To make it tenable at all, the transcription and transmission of the documents, thus supernaturally communicated, ought to have been as carefully guarded as their first communication. But this is notoriously and undeniably not the case. The variations between the earliest manuscripts in our possession and the latest ones prove conclusively that the custody of the sacred writings has not been exempted from the operation of the ordinary laws which affect the safe transmission of documents copied out time after time by human hands, and so handed down from one generation to another. The "genuine Bible,"—the Bible thus miraculously dictated to its first authors,—has no existence for us. It was given, if given at all, only to be lost ; and the words thus supernaturally communicated, must be recovered, and that at the best but imperfectly, by laborious criticism and uncertain conjecture.

(b) There may be some amongst us this afternoon, to whom these facts are both new and painful; who would gladly think that our English Bible is the infallible translation of an unambiguous text and an unquestioned original; and who may be disposed to be angry with the criticism which proves to us that this is not the case. To such persons I would say,—This vexatious, criticism has done such excellent service to the cause of the Gospel and the Scriptures, that we must be content to take its evil, if evil it be, along with its good. Its researches have enabled us to remove from the sacred text, as being no part of the original writings, some passages which may very possibly have been no slight stumbling-block and hindrance to our faith. The words interpolated in 1 John v. 7, 8, “in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth;” words, by which the sense of the passage is lost, and its force altogether destroyed; the verse (John v. 4), which attributes the healing virtue of the waters of Bethesda to the periodical descent of an angel into its pool; the last twelve verses of St. Mark’s Gospel, which cannot easily be harmonised with the accounts of the other Evangelists; these words and verses, for

example, must be removed from our Bibles, as forming no portion of the original documents, and their removal relieves us from no inconsiderable embarrassment and doubt. Could we but trace the sacred text back still nearer to its original source, the fresh alterations which we might find it necessary to make in our English Bibles would all, I do not doubt, be in the same direction of relief from perplexity, and of increase in light and clearness.¹

(c) But here I must guard against the possibility of being misunderstood. It is perfectly certain that our English version of the Bible is not always a correct version of the original. It is perfectly certain that the original from which that version was made, does not always give the exact words which were written by the authors. These facts are very important in their bearing upon certain notions about the Inspiration of the Bible, which some persons would gladly impose upon us. But it would be a great mistake to suppose that our English Bible is a deceptive or untrustworthy representative either of the present text or of the first original. It is a noble, though not altogether

¹ For example, the autograph of St. Matthew can hardly have contained Matt. xii. 40. Compare the parallel passage in St. Luke's Gospel (xi. 29, 30).

a faultless, translation of an original, nobler still ; which, in its turn, is an adequate, though not an unerring, transcript of the Apostolical autographs. For, after all, these variations between the earliest and the latest manuscripts do not affect a single important truth, and are in point of bulk not a thousandth part of the whole. As long as we use our English Bible for the purpose for which we ought to use it ; not for strife and wrangling and debate,—not as a quarry out of which stones may be hewn to fling at our neighbours' faith,—but in order to know our Lord Jesus Christ better, and therefore to know God better, and thus to grow daily in grace and virtue and holiness ; so long may we rest quite sure that it will not mislead us. We may trust implicitly to it. The Holy Spirit will take its words and make them profitable to us.

2. We pass from the consideration of the text of the sacred writings, and its unavoidable but comparatively unimportant deterioration through lapse of time, to the consideration of their contents. These contents, regarded not according to their outward form of poetry or prose, but according to their subject-matter, are partly historical, partly prophetic, partly doctrinal. It will be necessary to treat these divisions separately.

(a) In the historical division I include all those parts of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments alike which record past events or facts, whether those events and facts be recorded in books which would be commonly called historical, or no. For, indeed, these divisions, so far as the actual books are concerned, repeatedly cross one another; so that we find history in the prophetic and doctrinal books, and prophecy and doctrine in the historical books.

Now, on the threshold of this part of our subject, we are often met with the assertion that the Bible abounds with misstatements and contradictions; that it is in opposition to modern science, and at variance with itself in plain matters of fact. On the other hand, this assertion is strenuously contradicted by many who maintain, that not one single discrepancy between one part of the Scriptures and another can be *proved* to exist; and that the seeming oppositions between the Bible and Science will pass away, as our knowledge enlarges and our interpretations of the sacred books become sounder and more faithful.

There is certainly a tendency in some quarters to do grievous injustice to the Bible, partly through ignorant and hasty interpretations of its statements, and partly through a premature acceptance

of scientific theories which are as yet only on their trial. For example, the age of the world and the antiquity of man are, it seems to me, questions, about which the Bible, truly interpreted, leaves us in perfect freedom,—prepared to accept without a murmur the final conclusions of contending geologists.¹ Yet these very points would be singled out by some persons better acquainted with Science than with the Holy Scriptures, as

After the able Article of the Rev. G. Rorison in the “Replies to Essays and Reviews,” it is hardly necessary to point out the peculiar structure of Gen. i. 1—ii. 3, with its obvious parallelisms, and the inference thence to be drawn as to the intention of the writer. This first section gives not an *historical* account of creation, but its ground-plan and ideal pattern. It sets forth three great truths : (i) The fact of *creation* ; (ii) The perpetual dependence of the creation upon the Creator ; (iii) The scale and order of created things. The true parallel to Gen. i. is Rev. iv. :—and Rev. v. shews how this ideal is to be realised, and the actual world that we see around us conformed to the Divine Pattern.

The next section, Gen. ii. 4—iii. 24, is historical, not ideal ; but it is history couched in allegory. The tree of life, the tree of knowledge of good and evil, the subtle and talking serpent,—what are all these but obvious *symbols*, intimating to us at once, that we are dealing not with plain, matter-of-fact history, but with allegory ? We sin as much against the Scriptures, when we interpret what is allegorical literally, as when we interpret what is literal allegorically. The plain history does not commence till we reach the fourth chapter.

So far as I can see, there is nothing in the early chapters of Genesis to interfere with the theories of geologists as to the great age of the world ; and also nothing to exclude the sup-

proofs of an irreconcilable opposition between the teachings of the two. On the other hand, I am by no means prepared to maintain that the Bible is, on every subject and in every respect, consistent either with itself or with modern science. For example, the narrative of the Flood in the Book of Genesis seems to me to betray manifest tokens of a fusion of two not altogether consistent accounts,¹ as well as to contradict in some of its details, though not in its main features, the well-established conclusions of modern science. A great catastrophe by water,—the escape of a few of the race, through Divine Providence, from

position, as yet neither proved nor disproved, that there may have been more than one centre of human creation, and that the antiquity of man upon the earth may have been very great. On the contrary, the mention of "giants," and the contrast between "sons of God" and "daughters of men" (Gen. vi. 1—4) seem quite to suggest the existence of an earlier and inferior race and of more than one centre of creation. What these chapters really give us is: (a) The ground-plan of Creation; (b) The allegorical history of a representative pair of human beings; (c) A few facts from the history of their descendants.

All that St. Paul says in Rom. v. 12—21, is just as true on the supposition that Adam and Eve were a representative pair, as on the supposition that they were the first and only original pair. The unscriptural notion of inherited *guilt*, certainly, falls to the ground on the former supposition; but the true doctrine of original *sin* (Art. ix.) remains unaffected.

¹ I can see no way of reconciling Gen. vi. 19, 20, with Gen. vii. 2, 3.

the general, if not universal, wreck and ruin;—these main points of the narrative are, to my mind, for many reasons, certain and indisputable; while the lesser details are not, I think, equally free from doubt. Neither can I,—to take another example,—always reconcile the statements of the four Evangelists, in all their minute particulars, as to the life and works and words of Jesus Christ, without an amount of straining, assumption, and artifice, which one would not dream of applying to any other book, and which one ought specially to shrink from applying to the Bible. Only let it be well understood, that these slight superficial variations point, all the more conclusively, to the truth of the great underlying facts. When, for example, we find the words of Jesus at the Last Supper rendered thus by St. Matthew, “Drink ye all of it: for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins;”¹ and thus by St. Mark, “This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many;”² and thus by St. Luke, “This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you;”³ and thus by St. Paul, “This cup is the new testament in my blood; this do ye, as oft as

¹ Matt. xxvi. 27, 28.

² Mark xiv. 24.

³ Luke xxii. 20.

ye drink it, in remembrance of me :"¹ the reasonable inference unquestionably is, not that no such words were spoken at all, but that some such words were most certainly spoken, though the exact turning of the phrase may be doubtful. The variations in this, and in so many other cases, are indeed just those which honest and faithful reporters of the facts would be sure to fall into, unless miraculously preserved from doing so.²

It is a singular illustration of the extraordinary nature of the Holy Scriptures, that it should still be possible for devout and learned men to combat, not without some semblance of reason, the admission which I have just made. The truth is, that patient study and reflection do resolve so many difficulties and remove so many seeming discrepancies from the pages of Scripture, that it is not unnatural to suppose that, with time and thought and increased knowledge, all would dis-

¹ 1 Cor xi. 22.

² To this it must be added, that these very variations seem to put us in more certain possession of the mind or thought of Jesus, though we cannot always be sure of the precise words spoken by Him. They are a kind of substitute for voice, look, and emphasis. In this way the natural diversities of the reports are made subservient to a higher purpose. Those who have carefully studied the narratives of the Evangelists with the view of clearly realizing the actual events themselves, just as they happened, will understand my meaning well.

appear. Nevertheless, when, for example, I read Matt. xxvii. 3—8: "Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself. And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood. And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day:" and when I turn afterwards to Acts i. 18, 19, and read: "Now this man," *i. e.* Judas, "purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldema, that is to say, the field of blood:" I cannot but confess a discrepancy, which no amount of thought or information can possibly remove.¹ Supposing then that we are right, as

¹ A comparison of the Books of the Chronicles with those

I think we are, in making this admission; supposing that truth, candour, and justice compel us,

of Samuel and the Kings will shew several slight but distinct discrepancies. Compare, for example, 1 Chron. xxi. 5, 25, with 2 Sam. xxiv. 9, 24; 2 Chron. ii. 18, with 1 Kings v. 16; 2 Chron. viii. 18, with 1 Kings ix. 28.

There is a curious discrepancy in Numb. iii., which admits, I believe, of explanation. The three separate numbers of the Gershonites, Kohathites, and Merarites, given in vv. 22, 28, 34,—viz. 7520, 8600, and 6200,—are summed up in v. 39, as 22000, instead of 22,300.

In the Hebrew text, as it stands at present, the numbers are always written at full length. But the Hebrew text, as we have it now, dates from a careful recension of the text, made about the 2nd or 3rd century after Christ. The letters now in use, with which the MSS. of the Old Testament are written, are not of the original form. On the coins of the Maccabean princes, i.e. about the middle of the 2nd century before Christ,—and upon some signet stones, is found another character, doubtless in general use at an earlier period.—Ges. Heb. Gram. p. 14, (Bagster and Sons). Upon these same coins we find the letters of the alphabet used as signs of number. In all probability, therefore, the numbers in the Old Testament were not originally written at full length, as now, but were expressed by letters.—Ibid. p. 15.

Now it so happens that the letter of the ancient Hebrew alphabet employed to express 200, closely resembles that for 50. The number 6200 might thus easily be mistaken for 6050. *The Greek Version has 6050, and not 6200, as the number of the Merarites.*

Similarly, 8600 (which would probably be represented in letters by 8000 + 400 + 200, Ges. Heb. Gram. p. 15) might easily be mistaken for 8450. The addition of 7500, 8450, 6050, gives 22,000, the number set down in v. 39.

It is very possible that in the same way we ought to read 50,000 for 200,000 in 1 Sam. xv. 4, and 450,000 for 600,000, in Exod. xii. 37.

as I think they do, to make it; and remembering that, therefore, it will be the worse for us, and we shall be losers, if we do not make it; let us go on to consider what the consequences are which flow from it.

It would appear, then, that we have no reason to suppose that the information, the historical information, the information about past events, which the writers of the Bible possessed, was supernaturally communicated to them; or that they were supernaturally guarded from mistake in communicating that information to others. In other words, the *inspiration* of the Bible (if we, who are members of the Church of England, may be allowed to use a phrase which is not recognised by our formularies) does not imply the historical *infallibility* of the Bible. It does not imply that the Bible is absolutely free from mistake on every question of historical and scientific fact.

To some persons this may seem an alarming though a necessary inference from the admission previously made. They may find themselves inclined to struggle hard to recall the admission. Let me, then, once more and with all the force of which I am master, impress upon you the truth, so often and so fatally forgotten, that the Bible, strictly speaking, and however it may be *practi-*

cally to ourselves at this distance of time, is not the Revelation itself, but the after-written record of Revelation. God's revelations of Himself were made to living men, and made not by a book, but Face to face, and Spirit to spirit; made to Abraham, to Moses, to the prophets; made last of all, and above all, in Jesus Christ. The truth of this last, crowning, all-inclusive Revelation has been already established in the two preceding discourses. The fact that the Bible is the written record of a Revelation of God, puts at once a high honour and value upon it. But it does not assure us that it contains no mistakes on any subject whatever. If we find on examination that there are mistakes, *this* casts no discredit upon the Revelation. We could not tell, and we have no right to surmise, *à priori*, what kind of book the written record ought to be; whether faultless or not, whether infallible or not. God only knows what we need, and what would be best for us. It is for us, not to settle beforehand what the Bible ought to be, but to find by actual trial what it is. Be it what it may, we may be quite sure that it is best for us as it is.

And, in truth, the inference just reached, so soon as we are familiar with it, is found to take from us a yoke, not a prop; a burden, not a sup-

port. Our delight in the Scriptures will increase, not diminish, in proportion as we feel ourselves freed from the embarrassing necessity of proving every single statement in them to be infallibly correct. In this view of the Bible, all the phenomena which it presents to the critical inquirer, its various readings, its apparent discrepancies, its seeming departures from strict scientific truth, the gradual formation of the Canon of Scripture,¹ the

¹ For information on this important subject, see Mr. Westcott's very valuable book, "The Bible in the Church." It is important to remember,—for indeed it is perpetually in danger of being forgotten,—that the Sacred Writings were not stamped by God Himself with some outward indelible mark of authority, but were collected into one volume by the gradual action of the Church. God in his Providence called at one time the Jewish Church, and at another time the Christian Church, to decide what books should form part of the Sacred Canon. About some books there was no doubt or dispute whatever. But on the borders of either Canon there was a debateable ground. On the edge of the Canon of the Old Testament there were the Apocryphal Books, such as Ecclesiasticus, Wisdom, Maccabees. On the edge of the Canon of the New Testament, there were a few books about which there was much discussion, *e.g.* the 2nd Epistle of St. Peter, the 2nd and 3rd Epistles of St. John, the Epistle of Jude, the Epistle of Barnabas, and the Shepherd of Hermas. Eventually the last two were excluded from the Canon, and the remainder were admitted into it. But it was through the action of the Church, and not by any decision of Apostolical authority, that the scattered books of the New Testament were brought together long after the death of the last of the Apostles, and combined into one volume, along with the Scriptures of the Old Testament, as the Canon of Scripture, the rule of faith and practice.

doubts entertained about particular books and their place in it,—become simple, easy, and intelligible. We can deal with them frankly and freely, without sophistry or evasion. And in this faithful and honest dealing with the Scriptures, their true glory, depend upon it, will only be more distinctly discerned. We shall learn to love and reverence them not less, but more; to study them more diligently; to handle them more manfully and fearlessly, yet as scrupulously and as tenderly as ever, and with increased desire to reap the rich harvest of spiritual instruction with which they abound. Infidelity is thus disarmed of some of its most dangerous weapons; and Christianity once more leads, as it should ever lead and as it has so often led, the van of human progress in every department of thought and action. The weary talk about reason and faith and their essential opposition is at an end. The student of the Bible and the student of physical science may rejoice together. Each may help the other; each may learn from the other.

Now, at this point, inasmuch as we have been compelled to abandon the position that a statement as to facts is true simply because it is contained in the Scriptures, it becomes necessary for us to inquire what is the logical ground upon which our

confidence in the narratives contained in the Bible reposes. We shall do this most conveniently by examining two questions, intimately connected with our present subject, and which have been brought very prominently before us of late ; one, the question of miracles,—and the other, the question of the credibility of the early Jewish history.

We come to these questions, you will observe, assured of the truth of Christianity,—assured that Jesus is the Son of God ; but not assured of the truth of every statement of every kind contained in the Bible.

i. The difficulty about miracles, I believe, arises mainly out of a false view of nature. To some minds nature is a dead thing,—a piece of mechanism, set going once for all by its Author, and thenceforth left to itself and the operation of physical laws. To minds prepossessed and saturated with this view, it seems a thing incredible that the Author of Nature should, from time to time, as it were, put his hand into a piece of machinery, so delicate and so beautiful, and interfere with the regular action of its works, by suspending laws or accelerating results.

But the whole difficulty vanishes, as soon as we conceive more correctly of nature, and view it

not from this dead mechanical point of view, but from another and a truer. Regard nature as resting at every moment upon the thoughts and the will of the Creator;¹ view the world and all things as owing their past origin and their present form to the continuous operation of Christ the Word; listen to the saying of Jesus, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work;"²—and then this difficulty about miracles³ disappears. The disturbances of the natural order, the interruptions of the natural laws, do but serve to reveal the ever-present Worker, from whom both the order and the laws at every moment proceed.

Now it is to be observed that the miracles of the Bible gather, in two great groups, around the mission of Jesus and the legislation of Moses; that is, around the two great centres of Revelation of the Old Testament and the New. In both cases they formed an integral and essential part of the process by which the Revelation itself was illustrated and enforced. The miracles of Jesus were not merely works of power, attesting a Divine mission; but, still more, as St. John ever calls them, "*signs*," shewing what He is, and therefore

¹ Where shall we find a truer view of nature, than in Gen. i.; John i. 3, 4; Col. i. 16, 17; Rev. iv.?

² John v. 17.

³ See Note III. at the end of this Sermon.

what the Father is. In a true view of nature, the repugnance to miracles on the part of our reason ceases. In their connection with the Revelation of God, and as forming a necessary part of that Revelation, our moral sense finds no difficulty in them. Our belief in the reported miracles of Jesus rests ultimately, not on the bare fact that they are recorded in the Bible, but on the proved and ascertained fact that Jesus is the Son of God.

ii. And now, further, as to the credibility of the early Jewish history. A recent writer, examining the Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua, has endeavoured to shew that the history contained in them is unreliable, and to a large extent fabulous. The fatal defect of the *method* pursued by him, apart from any consideration of errors of detail, lies in this,—that he has studied the history by itself, excluding Christianity altogether from his field of view. Now this is just as great a mistake, as it would be in science to estimate the truth of an early discovery merely by the evidence on which it was first promulgated, excluding altogether all the evidence subsequently adduced.

The analogy of physical science is indeed most helpful here; as where is it not, on these subjects, most helpful? The discoveries of science are in the kingdom of nature, what the Revelations of

God are in the kingdom of heaven ; and our Lord Himself, both by his parables and by his miracles, has taught us to use the former as helps to a right understanding of the latter. Now the real evidence for any scientific truth is not merely the evidence which existed at the time of its first discovery, but the whole sum of the evidence, first and last, upon which every succeeding truth in the same series rests. Each later discovery takes up the earlier into itself, at once including and confirming it. Thus, for example, the Copernican or Heliocentric theory of the Solar system does not rest merely upon the evidence which Copernicus himself could produce, when he gave his great discovery to the world, but upon the subsequent discoveries also of Kepler and of Newton. And our confidence in the soundness of the Copernican system is to be measured not only by the reasons which satisfied Copernicus himself, but also by those which convince us of the truth of Kepler's laws of planetary motion, and of Newton's great law of Universal Gravitation.¹

¹ What would be thought of a person who should propose to obliterate all that has been done in astronomy since the time of Copernicus, and to go back to his data, in order to settle the question of the true motion of the earth? To take the Pentateuch by itself, regardless of its relation to the history which follows and which culminates in the Advent of the Messiah, is like taking the Copernican system by itself, regardless of all the confirmatory evidence of later discoveries.

As it is in science and the kingdom of nature, so it is also in Revelation and the kingdom of heaven. When God appeared to Moses in the wilderness, and revealed Himself as the "I AM THAT I AM," He said, "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." In this new revelation a fresh guarantee was thus given for the reality of God's dealings with the patriarchs. And, in the same way, each succeeding prophet in the long line of prophets, ending with John the Baptist, impressed afresh the Divine signet upon the veracity of that "Word of the Lord," which had come to Abraham and to Moses and to all his own prophetic predecessors; until at last there came One, who could speak on this wise: "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it and was glad:"¹ "As touching the dead, that they rise, have ye not read in the Book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? He is not the God of the dead, but of the living."² Our confidence in the fact that God called Abraham and taught him, and that He revealed Himself to Moses, and that He spoke by the prophets, is really to be measured,

¹ John viii. 56.

² Mark xii. 26, 27.

not by our confidence in the exact historical fidelity of the Book of Genesis or of the whole Pentateuch,—not by our belief as to the time when, and the persons by whom, those books were written; but by the confidence of our faith in Jesus as the Son of God. Each earlier revelation is taken up into every later one, and receives at every such adoption a fresh guarantee of its truth. Our confidence in the earliest *revelation* is therefore to be measured not by our confidence in the unimpeachable accuracy of the earliest *record* taken by itself, but by our confidence in the latest *revelation*. In brief, the latest revelation guarantees the earliest: and, speaking generally, the revelation guarantees the record, not the record the revelation. And when I say that the revelation guarantees the record, I do not mean that it guarantees the literal and infallible exactness of every part, but its substantial accuracy and general trustworthiness. Having good and sufficient reason for believing, and being fully satisfied, that God did reveal Himself to Abraham, to Moses, to the prophets, and lastly by his Son,—we cannot but place confidence in the written record which reports to us the nature and object of those revelations. The very purpose of Revelation itself would be defeated,

if its written witness, on which after ages were to be almost wholly dependent, were unworthy of trust. Faith in the Revelation carries with it necessarily, though in a lower and qualified degree, faith in the Bible.

(b) We pass from the historical division of the contents of the Bible to the prophetical,—including large portions of many of the books of the Old Testament, and, in the New, much of the Revelation of St. John, and some of the discourses of our Lord contained in the Gospels.

I use the word “prophetical” here in its narrowest sense as equivalent to “predictive.” The wider meanings of the word, according to which the prophets were preeminently speakers for God and preachers of righteousness, will fall under our third division.

On the threshold of this part of our subject, again, we are often met with the *à priori* argument, that there can be no such thing as the prediction of future events; and all prophecy, which looks like prediction, is at once relegated to a later date, conformably to this assumed major premiss. It is hardly necessary to point out the unreasonableness of this assumption. The student of the Bible and the student of Nature alike will make small progress in their respective studies, if they

begin by assuming that such and such things cannot be, instead of trying simply to discover what is. The real question is, "Does the Bible contain positive predictions? and were those predictions fulfilled or no?"

That, at the time of the birth of Jesus, the Jewish nation was in full expectation of the coming of the Messiah, and that this expectation was derived from and nursed by the language of their ancient prophets,—admits of no manner of doubt. It seems to me equally certain that the language of these prophets fully sustains the expectation; and that the Jews might, if they would, out of their own Scriptures have satisfied themselves,—as many did satisfy themselves,—that Jesus was the Christ. Here, then, we have an example of genuine prediction faithfully fulfilled.

Or, to take another instance, it seems to me as certain as anything of the past can be, that our Saviour before his death foretold the destruction of Jerusalem, and even named armies, which could only be Roman armies, as the agents of that destruction. Alike by parable and by plainest speech He announced the coming end: by parable, when He said, "The king sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and

burned up their city ;”¹ by plain speech, when He said to his disciples, “When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.”² Here, then, we have another example of distinct prediction literally fulfilled. In this case, too, the date is fixed, and truly fixed, as well as the event. For the prediction is closed with the words, “This generation shall not pass away till all be fulfilled.”³

And these examples cannot possibly be explained away as specimens of the farsighted sagacity of eminent and devout men. No amount of mere human sagacity, however deeply versed in the laws of the Divine government of the world, could enable the prophets to predict a Messiah, a Christ, a King of men who is a sufferer,—a Priest of men, upon whom is laid the iniquity of all,—a Son of man, who is also the Son of God. To those who

¹ Matt. xxii. 7. Mark xii. 9.

² Luke xxi. 20.

³ There is no difficulty in referring Matt. xxiv. 4—35 wholly to the events which occurred within fifty years of our Lord’s death, as v. 34 compels us to do, if proper attention be paid to the well-known symbolism of prophetic language and the associations of the early Jewish history. But at v. 36 the subject changes. In the language of the New Testament, “*That Day*,” or “*The Day*,” is always the great Day of Judgment. Compare Matt. vii. 22 ; Luke x. 12, 14 ; 2 Tim. i. 12, 18, iv. 8 : Rev. vi. 17. From xxiv. 36 to xxv. 46, the subject is the coming of the Judge to final judgment.

believe in Christ as the Word who is the Light of men, the phenomena of prophecy are quite reasonable and natural. He, in whom men are, and who has such ready access to the springs of thought and will in them, could reveal Himself without difficulty in his chosen instruments, and enable them to proclaim Him to their fellows also. The prophets spoke not out of their own thoughts merely, but his Spirit spake by them.¹ Or, as St. Peter says, "Prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake, being moved by the Holy Ghost."²

It is sometimes urged, that we have in the Bible instances of predictions which have failed of their fulfilment,—prophecies which have been defeated, not sustained, by the event. It might be so; we have no right to say, *à priori*, that it could not be so. Every alleged instance of the kind must be dealt with on its own merits. Certainly some of the cases which have been brought forward as examples of this supposed frustration of prophecy, have been singularly unfortunate for those who have brought them forward.³ It must be remembered, too, that Scripture itself furnishes

¹ "Who spake by the prophets."—Nicene Creed.

² 2 Pet i. 21.

³ See "Essays and Reviews," p. 343. Compare "Aids to Faith," pp. 105—110. Pusey on Daniel, Lecture v.

us in the Book of Jonah with an example of a seeming defeat of prophecy, which was really no defeat. The message came, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be destroyed." But the message brought repentance. And repentance removed the threatened judgment. In every announcement of Divine vengeance for sin there is a saving clause,—sometimes expressed, but more often understood, "Except thou repent."¹ Whatever view we may take of the Book of Jonah, whether we regard it as allegory or as sober history, this great principle of prophecy is plainly announced there, and was certainly familiar to the Jewish mind.²

In speaking thus of prophecy I am not forgetting that our question this afternoon is, "What is the Bible?" The truth is, that, in this second division of the contents of the Bible, the revelation itself and its record flow repeatedly into one. Many of the prophets wrote their own prophecies. They set down with their own hands the things which they had heard and seen, when "the Word of Jehovah came" to them, or when "the heavens were opened," and they beheld "visions of God."³ In the historical division the record and the reve-

¹ Rev. ii. 5; 1 Kings xxi. 17—29.

² See Jer. xviii. 5—10.

³ Ezek. i. 1.

lation often lie far apart from one another,—the light of the revelation being sometimes only dimly seen through the mist of tradition. What written record, for example, did Abraham leave of God's dealings with him? How many years passed before the story of his life was fixed in writing? We can only guess the answer.¹ In this prophetic division, on the contrary, the Revelation and the record frequently coincide, and whatever is true of the former is true also, with some limitation, of the latter. For these prophetic books unquestionably betray occasional marks of a col-

¹ I have not attempted in this Sermon to offer any speculations upon the *origin* of the Pentateuch; that being a purely critical question, which my subject did not require me to enter upon. It may safely be predicted, that the speculations of the Bishop of Natal upon this subject,—involving, as they do, intellectual difficulties and moral perplexities far worse and more unbearable than those which the most rigid upholder of the historical and scientific infallibility of the Bible would impose upon us,—will fail to gain any permanent acceptance. But the forcing of such questions upon the attention of the Church may result, under God's guidance, in our arriving at a more solid and substantial foundation for Christian faith, than has recently been ours. Though Bishop Colenso's speculations be rejected, he himself will have been, in great measure, the instrument, under God, of bringing about this most desirable result. All who admire the honest utterance of sincere though mistaken conviction, will rejoice that an earnest worker should not fail of his reward, though it be not exactly the reward which he himself may have laboured for and would have chosen for himself.

lector's, and even of an editor's, hand. Their different parts are seemingly put together with little attention to chronology,¹ or any other principle of arrangement. Sometimes it is hard to resist the conclusion, that the works of two different prophets have been combined in one book.² Human hands may again and again be traced; and the vessel which contains the Divine treasure is plainly earthen. But as surely as the vessel is earthen, so surely is the treasure Divine.

¹ Compare, for example, Ezek. xxxii. 1. with xxxiii. 21.

² It seems difficult to doubt that the last twenty-seven chapters of Isaiah were written by a prophet of the captivity; and certainly they become unspeakably more interesting and instructive on that supposition. The ordinary objections against the Book of Daniel seem to have been well disposed of by Dr. Pusey in his recently published "Lectures on Daniel the Prophet." Dr. Pusey shows,—I think, conclusively,—that it is more reasonable to believe that the Book of Daniel was written at the time when, and by the person by whom, it professes to have been written, than at any later time, or by any other person. And this is a very valuable result, both as removing the aspersions which have been cast upon the Book, and as establishing the reality of a distinctly *predictive* element in the Holy Scriptures. Into those general difficulties with which this Sermon endeavours to deal, he can hardly be said to enter.

It is greatly to be regretted that a work so learned and valuable should be disfigured by a contemptuous and almost insolent treatment of "Rationalists" and "Unbelievers," and, worse still, by the monstrous charge of "blasphemy," (Preface, p. xxviii. note z.), directed against such a noble and true-hearted writer as Mr. Maurice.

We have already seen that, in so far as the writers of the Bible were historians of the Past, we have no reason to suppose that the needful information was supernaturally communicated to them, or that they were supernaturally guarded from mistake in communicating it to others. They wrote faithfully, honestly, earnestly,—with a remarkable self-restraint and simplicity and reticence which we can never sufficiently admire,—but not, it would seem, in the consciousness of receiving knowledge miraculously imparted from above. But in so far as the writers of the Bible were prophets, predicting the Future, they wrote in the full light of their own special illumination, and in the consciousness of receiving knowledge, which they could not have acquired by the exercise of their own unaided faculties. In this respect the Bible has upon it the evident stamp of a Divine Spirit, and is lifted at once above the level of all other books. Let us see what the examination of the third division of its contents may constrain us to add to this.

(c) In this third division of the contents of the Bible, I include all that which is in the nature of positive teaching as to God and man,—what God is and is to man, and what man is and should be in the sight of God. This doctrinal element,

it will be seen at once, traverses more or less every book of the Bible, and forms the principal structure of some.¹ In a sense it may be said to be the soul and life of the rest.

For indeed the more anxiously we study the Scriptures under this doctrinal aspect, the more closely we interrogate them as to the nature of God, and his revelation of Himself to men,—the more profoundly are we impressed with their amazing vitality and spiritual power, their ability to convince men of sin and of righteousness and of judgment. One of our own poets has described this spirit of life and power in the Scriptures, which all who will may verify for themselves, in these just and striking words:—

“Eye of God’s Word! where’er we turn
Ever upon us! thy keen gaze
Can all the depths of sin discern,
Unravel every bosom’s maze;
Who that has felt thy glance of dread
Thrill thro’ his heart’s remotest cells,
About his path, about his bed,
Can doubt what spirit in Thee dwells?”

Hence it is, that that great expositor of the Scriptures, Calvin, speaking against what he calls

¹ *E. g.* the Psalms and Prophets of the Old Testament, and the Epistles of the New.

² Keble’s “Christian Year,” St. Bartholomew’s Day.

the "impious invention" that the authority of the Bible depends upon the decision of the Church, writes thus: "But as for their asking, 'How shall we be persuaded that the Scripture has come from God, unless we take refuge in the decision of the Church?'—it is just as if one should ask, 'How shall we learn to distinguish light from darkness, white from black, sweet from bitter? For the Scripture carries on the face of it just as clear a perception of its truth, as white and black things of their colour, sweet and bitter things of their taste.'"¹ Hence, too, a recent writer has said: "This has been, for some thirty years, a deep conviction of my soul, that no book can be written in behalf of the Bible like the Bible itself. Man's defences are man's word; they may help to beat off attacks, they may draw out some portion of its meaning. The Bible is God's Word, and through it God the Holy Ghost, who spake it, speaks to the soul which closes not itself against it."² Hence, too, our great poet-philosopher, Coleridge, looking forwards in his far-sighted way to the difficulties which are perplexing men's minds now, wrote thus: "In the Bible there is more that *finds* me than I have experienced in all other books put

¹ Inst. I. vi.

² Pusey's Lectures on Daniel, Pref. p. xxv.

together: the words of the Bible find me at greater depths of my being; and whatever finds me brings with it an irresistible evidence of its having proceeded from the Holy Spirit."¹ And to these testimonies of men so eminent, yet so different, let me add, in order to complete the many-sidedness of the witness, the testimony of one greater than any but unlike them all. "The Bible" says Luther in his Table Talk,² "is the book that makes fools of the wise of this world; it is understood only of the plain and simple-hearted. Esteem this book as the precious fountain that can never be exhausted. In it thou findest the swaddling-clothes and the manger whither the angels directed the poor simple shepherds; they seem poor and mean, but dear and precious is the treasure that lies therein."

For indeed here, in this third division of the contents of the Bible, the record and the revelation are almost wholly at one; and whatever is true of the latter is true also, with hardly any limitation,³ of the former. Men, "full of faith and of the Holy Ghost," walking in the light of God and in the joy of his presence, wrote out of the abundance

¹ "Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit," p. 13.

² Bogue's Edition, p. 26.

³ See Sermon VII.

of light and joy, peace and truth, that was in them. They became thus, as it were, a transparent medium, through which the Light might shine on other hearts throughout all subsequent ages, that joy and peace and truth might reign in them also.

And this wondrous power and life, which we Christians of the nineteenth century find and feel in the Scriptures, or might find and feel in them, if we would, was just as much found and felt by the Christians of the first generation as by us. The Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ studied, delighted in, and learned from the Scriptures of the Old Testament,¹ just as the Church of all subsequent ages has studied, delighted in, and learned from the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments together. Every generation in turn has drawn water from these wells of salvation, one after one fashion, and another after another,—one by one mode of interpretation, and another by another; but all alike have agreed in declaring, that the well from which they have drawn was indeed a well of salvation, healing, and life. So copious

¹ The use made by the Apostles of the Scriptures of the Old Testament, both for their own growth in the knowledge of Christ and for their guidance in difficult emergencies, is very remarkable. Compare, for example, Acts xv. 15—17. See Sermon V.

is this wonderful Book, so varied, so versatile, so deep, so true to human nature, so capable of adapting itself to the spiritual wants of men of all ages and ranks, intellects and acquirements,—that it has held them in all times and under all circumstances with a grasp, which they could not, if they would, shake off.

This experience of the vital power of the Scriptures is one which all may make who will. Those whose duty it is to study the Bible not only for their own individual profit, but also in order to instruct others out of it,¹ will be able and will rejoice to bear yet another testimony to its extraordinary excellence and glory. They will thankfully and joyfully tell of the heights and depths of truth, which are revealed to them as they earnestly and patiently study it; of the exquisite inward harmonies which pervade it; of its endless power to minister comfort and warning, healing and life, to the souls of their fellow-men. They are willing to spend their whole lives in the study and the ministry of its words; so profoundly satisfying to spirit and intellect alike do they find them. The more they examine it, the more they are struck

¹ There are times when this study of the Scriptures produces such a conviction of their authority and truth, as would seem to make it impossible ever afterwards to doubt.

with the essential unity of its teaching. Though written at such various times and by so many authors, it is not a mere library or collection of books. It is, we may say, a single volume, having a manifest though mysterious unity of its own. There is a unity of subject. For the Book is the record of a gradual Revelation of God, and of a progressive education of men to receive that Revelation. There is a unity of doctrine. With all their differences of character, circumstance, and utterance, the prophets of the Old Testament, though standing in a fainter and a lesser light, are really at one with the Apostles and Evangelists of the New; and these last, again, are perfectly at one amongst themselves.¹ There is even what we may call a unity of composition. The Book, like the curve of a perfect circle, returns into itself. The uniting thought, which runs through the whole,—appearing on the first page and reappearing on the last,—is “the tree of life.”²

¹ The fundamental harmony of thought, amidst much variety of expression, that subsists between Paul and John and Peter and James, is very surprising and cannot fail to be exceedingly impressive to those, who go on year by year studying their writings and striving to learn from them,—to see as they saw, and feel as they felt. Indeed, the more one tries to analyse the notion of *the inspiration of the Bible*, the more does it resolve itself into the fact of this living unity of the whole, its *organization*, and the harmony and adaptation of its several parts.

² Gen. ii. 9; Rev. xxii. 2.

“the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested unto us ;” and of which it is said, “This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.”¹

3. I find in all these remarkable phenomena, not only that which differences the Bible from all other books, but also a cogent and conclusive argument for the truth of Christianity. I can account for them only on the Christian hypothesis, that the one true eternal God, whose name is Jehovah,—the self-existent, the unchangeable, the selfsame,—after speaking at sundry times and in divers manners by his prophets, did at last, when the fulness of the time was come, speak to men by his Son. The Bible, read in the bondage of some theory as to its supernatural dictation or its presumed infallibility, may easily be converted into an argument against Christianity. But the Bible, read in freedom and under no bondage of human theories, becomes one of the strongest arguments for the truth of Christianity. It adds the last item to the long series of evidences which we have rapidly passed in review, and of which we may well say with the Psalmist, “Thy testimonies, O Lord, are very sure.”²

And now, in answer to the question, “What is

¹ 1 John i. 2

² 1 John v. 11.

³ Psalm xciii. 5.

the Bible?" let us be content with simply saying, "The Bible is the Book which God has provided by ways and means known only to Himself,—by the operation of his Providence and the inspiration of his Spirit, working through human instrumentality,—to serve as the great agent in the spiritual education of the human race; a Book which may therefore fitly be called 'God's Word written,' 'Holy Writ,' 'Holy Scripture.'" We need not, we will not presume to offer any theory as to the nature of its inspiration. Our Church gives us none, and we seem to me to want none. Every theory that has been hitherto propounded labours under some radical defect. It either ignores some fact, or it trespasses upon some mysterious region, into which the intellect of man cannot penetrate. It would be well for us, I fancy, if we could be content to drop the phrase altogether, and to think more entirely of the one everlasting Spirit of Truth, who is present with the Church in all ages, and who can use, and alone can use, Bible, Sacraments, and all the other countless means of grace, as ministeries of life to our souls. "The letter killeth: the Spirit quickeneth."

"Wisdom," our Lord said, "is justified of her children." The more we meditate upon the subject,

¹ Art. vi., xx.

² Matt. xi. 19.

themore, I am convinced, shall we justify the wisdom of God in giving us just such a Book as the Bible is. Could it be shewn to be wholly free from inconsistency and error, what danger would there not be of its being placed in a position which it was never intended to occupy, and made a substitute for the eternal Spirit of Truth, instead of his most choice and precious instrument! Even as it is, Christian people at the present day may be heard speaking of it in a way, to which its own pages lend no countenance.¹ According to them, the "New Testament," or "Covenant," would seem to be, just what St. Paul in our text says it is not, a "testament" or "covenant" "of the letter,"—that is "in writing",—and not "of the spirit." Whereas he says distinctly that it is a covenant, *not*, like its predecessor, "of letter," *not* "written," not "engraven in stones"; but "of spirit," and *therefore* of righteousness and life.

Amongst the Jews of our Lord's time there was the most scrupulous reverence for, and even worship of the letter of the Bible. "It cannot be broken," said they. "There is eternal life in

¹ Where do the Bible writers lay any claims to infallibility? Certainly St. Paul does not do so. See 1 Cor. vii. 25, 40; x. 15; 2 Cor. i. 24. Nor St. Peter; 1 Pet. v. 1. Nor St. John; 1 John ii. 20, 21, 27, iv. 1—3.

² John x. 35. I understand our Lord as referring his hearers

it,"¹ they said again. And yet with all this worship of the letter of the Bible, they rejected and crucified the Christ. And even so, at the present day, there are many who raise a vehement outcry against the gentlest impeachment of the absolute infallibility of the Bible, and who yet, by lives of worldliness, carelessness, and sin, are daily crucifying the Son of God afresh, and putting Him to an open shame. Let us take heed to ourselves, brethren. The spirit of the Scribes and Pharisees is not yet extinct. It is latent in us all. It may be overmastering us when we least think it, and when we are fancying ourselves only zealous for the truth and doing service² to God.

Our Lord Jesus Christ corrected the Pharisaical estimate of the Scriptures by saying, "They are they which testify of me." "Search the Scriptures," He said, "for in them *ye* think *ye* have eternal life; and they *are* they which testify of me." And St. Paul says,—in words which give us the very simplest test and measure of inspiration,—"Every scripture, given by inspiration of God, is also profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction,

to one of their own maxims, without expressing either approval or disapproval of it: "If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came, and if, as you say, the scripture cannot be broken."

¹ John v. 39.

² John xvi. 2.

for instruction in righteousness.”¹ Let us learn to search and profit by the Scriptures accordingly. Let us search them, in order to reprove, correct, and instruct ourselves in righteousness. Let us search them as “the testimony of Jesus,” and the gift of God,—in reverence, humility, and prayer. Then all will be well with us. Their inspiration will then be to us no longer a dead theory, but a living fact; their words, not mere words, but “spirit and life.”²

¹ 2 Tim. iii. 15—17. I have adopted what seems unquestionably the correct rendering of the sixteenth verse. The whole passage teaches us,—First, that the Holy Scriptures can “make wise unto salvation” only “through faith in Jesus Christ”;—Secondly, that in proportion to their inspiration they are “profitable for instruction in righteousness”,—that all their power to convince of sin, to correct and instruct, is due to the Spirit of God;—Thirdly, that the purpose for which they are thus inspired is, that we may be “perfect”,—“thoroughly prepared for every good work.”

² John vi. 63.

NOTE I. ON SERMON IV.

THE COMPOSITION OF THE BOOK OF GENESIS.

THE subject of the preceding Sermon has made it necessary to enter into some discussion of the relation of the Bible to the science of Geology; and this again necessitated some remarks upon the character of the early chapters of the Book of Genesis. Biblical criticism has, amongst many most interesting subjects, few more interesting than that of the probable composition of the Book of Genesis,—the sources from which, and the person by whom it was compiled. The question is hardly yet ripe for solution; and when the solution comes, it can at the best be only approximate. For it must not be forgotten that the conclusions of historical criticism are eminently precarious; and *this*, as has been already shown,¹ from the very nature of the case.

In aiming at a satisfactory solution of this question as to the composition of the Book of Genesis, the following points must be carefully attended to; and any proposed theory must adequately explain them.

1. Is there, or is there not, a clear opposition between Geological science and the Scriptural narrative in the case of the Deluge? Does not the former pronounce decisively against a uni-

¹ See Preface to the Second Edition.

versal Deluge, and does not the latter distinctly assert it? (See Gen. vi. 17, vii. 19—23.) We must beware of the sophistical gloss which some are attempting to put upon the subject, by saying: "The Deluge cannot have been universal; *therefore* the writer of the Scripture narrative cannot have intended to say that it was universal."

Neither need we be at all surprised at the existence of such an opposition. The Bible, as has often been remarked, was certainly not given to teach us science. God has been teaching us *that* in quite another way. For, let us remember, the real source and author of all truth,—whether physical, moral, or spiritual,—is God Himself. From Him it all comes; and to Him the glory of it is due; and we are bound to receive it reverently and thankfully as His gift to us.

To me, I confess, the real matter of surprise is, not that there should be one clear opposition between Genesis and Geology, but that there should be, as I believe there is, only one. The testimony of the rocks is a testimony to an orderly progress from the inorganic to the organic; and again, from the living thing of a lower organization, to the living thing of a higher organization; from the plant to the animal, and from the animal up, through an ascending scale, to the crown of creation in man. And this is one great lesson also of the Book of Genesis; though to this great lesson it adds one greater still, which unaided science cannot teach,—namely, that all creation proceeds from, and at every moment rests upon, the will and word of the living God.

2. Is it, or is it not possible to separate the constituents of the Book of Genesis into at least

two series of documents, which are not always in thorough harmony with one another? Upon this point there seems to be a very general agreement amongst biblical critics. It appears to be generally admitted that two documents may certainly be traced in the Book, distinguished from each other by several slight marks, but more especially by a different use of the Divine Name; these documents being wrought together into one work by some master-mind.

Here, again, let me say, we have no right to be surprised, if learned men, toiling year after year over the pages of this wonderful Book of Genesis, should be able to make out, to their own satisfaction and that of others, that older documents can be traced and distinguished in its composition. Have we any right to expect that it would be otherwise? We know for certain, that later Books of the Bible,—for example the Books of Joshua and of Samuel and of the Kings and of the Chronicles,—were written by the aid of earlier and often cotemporary writings. The Books themselves tell us so; making, as they do, frequent reference to such earlier writings,¹ and giving us the names of many of them. Have we any right to expect that it would be otherwise with the Book of Genesis? Nay, when we come to reflect upon the matter, could it have been otherwise? Does not the Book become intelligible to us on this supposition, and on no other.

3. If this be so,—if there be a clear opposition between the Book of Genesis and the science of

¹ Josh. x. 13. xviii. 9; 1 Sam. x. 25; 2 Sam. i. 18; 1 Kings, xi. 41, xiv. 19, 29; 2 Kings, i. 18; 1 Chron. xxix. 29; 2 Chron. ix. 29, xii. 15. See also Exod. xvii. 14; Numb. xxi. 14.

Geology on the question of the Flood, and if different and sometimes differing documents are found imbedded in the general structure of the Book,—can we maintain that the narrative has been supernaturally guarded from error, or that the events recorded in it were supernaturally communicated to the writer? And if not, can we doubt that oral tradition must have played a considerable part in supplying much of the data of at least the earliest history? Can the written documents on which the Book of Genesis, as we have it, is founded, be referred in any case to an earlier time than that of Joseph?

4. But oral tradition amongst a people which have no written history, and when it is the only means of transmitting past events, may attain to almost any degree of accuracy.¹ To suppose that the early history was handed down orally from father to son,² does not necessarily cast discredit upon its general accuracy; while it accounts for many inequalities and difficulties in detail that we find in it.

5. But oral tradition, though it will account for much that we find in the early chapters of Genesis, will not account for all. The first three chapters of the Book stand apart by themselves, having a remarkable character of their own, and an indescribable value.³ When a sound interpretation has

¹ In an age of books, like the present, it is difficult to appreciate the value and the accuracy of such tradition. Captain Hall found amongst the Esquimaux in 1861, very exact traditions of the Frobisher expeditions of 1576—8. "Life with the Esquimaux," vol. I. pp. 300—306.

² "Life with the Esquimaux," vol. II. pp. 94, 171, 212, 284. For the Esquimaux tradition of the Deluge, see *Ibid.* p. 318. The Esquimaux are supposed to have been originally an Asiatic people.

³ For the amazing superiority of the Mosaic over every

done its work,—when the half-poetical form of the first chapter, and the allegorical form of the second and third, have been fully taken into account,—there remains nothing in them, so far as I can see, for hostile criticism to fasten upon. They are neither in opposition to science, nor out of harmony with one another. If we assign Gen. i. 1—ii. 3 to one writer, and Gen. ii. 4—iii. 24 to another, still it is clear that the true relation of the first section to the second is fully recognised, and the ideal character of the former distinctly laid down in the remarkable words with which the second section begins (ii. 4, 5): “These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, and *every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew.*” Creation,—the order of created things,—the relation of man to the inferior animals,—the relation of the man to the woman,—the relation of the man and the woman to God,—the origin of evil; such are the great subjects of which these three chapters treat, and of which they treat in a manner which no later writing has ever superseded. Is it too great a stretch of fancy to refer the first section to the hand of Joseph, at once the descendant of Abraham and the lord of Egypt; and the second section to the hand of Moses,—the great prophet and legislator of the Israelitish race, the heir to

other ancient cosmogony, both in good sense and religious teaching, see “Replies to ‘Essays and Reviews,’” p. 309, and the authorities quoted there. See also Kalisch on Gen. i. 1, 2. “The very opening sentence of Genesis,” writes Kalisch, “manifests the infinite superiority of the Mosaic notions over all the systems of antiquity.”

all the wisdom of Egypt, the man to whom God spoke face to face?¹

6. What is the relation of Exod. xx. 11 to Gen. i. on the one hand, and to Deut. v. 15 on the other? The author of "the Jewish Church" suggests (Lect. VII. p. 174), that "the Commandments alone must have been engraven" on the two tables of stone "without the reasons for their observance." In that case, the Fourth Commandment would run thus: "Remember the Sabbath-day, to sanctify it." In repeating the law to the people at the end of their wanderings, Moses altered the one word "Remember" into "Observe." (See the Hebrew of Exod. xx. 8; Deut. v. 12.) The remainder of the Commandment (Exod. xx. 9—11; Deut. v. 13—15) was neither written on the tables, nor spoken by the Lord "out of the midst of the fire" (Deut. v. 22).² It was added by Moses, by way of explanation, illustration, and enforcement of the simple command, "Remember the Sabbath-day, to sanctify it."

Did, then, the author of Exod. xx. 11 understand Gen. i. 1—ii. 3, in that literal way, in which so many readers of the Bible understand it still? Or did he mean merely to bring up the most true thought, that man, being made in the image of God (Gen. i. 26, 27), must make God his pattern and be a follower of Him (Eph. v. 1)? We cannot say for certain. But at any rate, the change

¹ On the general question of the authorship of the Pentateuch see "The Mosaic Origin of the Pentateuch Considered," Skeffington, 1864.

² By the expression "These words" (Deut. v. 22) we are to understand merely "These commandments." The ten "commandments" are properly the ten "words." Exod. xxxiv. 28, margin; "Jewish Church," Lect. VII. p. 175.

in Deut. v. 15 shews conclusively how little value was then attached to this literal view of creation, as having been actually effected in the six working days of the week.

7. It has been already said that the hypothesis of the great antiquity of man upon the earth cannot yet be regarded as either proved or disproved. Nevertheless, the balance of the evidence seems to incline decidedly in its favour. Hence it is a point which, in any examination of the Book of Genesis, can no longer be left out of the account. Should it become, as it seems likely to become, an accepted fact,—what does it involve? May it not involve at any rate some readjustment and modification of our interpretations of the language of Scripture, just as astronomical discoveries have done before?¹

About two hundred and fifty years ago, the discovery of the true motion of the earth was supposed to contradict the teaching of the Scriptures, and was pronounced heretical accordingly. The Church of Rome had even the unwisdom to condemn the great teacher of the new philosophy, and compel him to recant his errors and to deny *that*, which no one now dreams of doubting. We Protestants smile, at this day, at the folly of those times.

¹ When we read, "The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved; I bear up the pillars of it" (Psalm lxxv. 3); "The world is stablished, that it cannot be moved" (Psalm xciii. 3); "Who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever" (Psalm civ. 5; Job xxxviii. 4—7); *we* treat the language as the just and appropriate language of poetry. Older generations, when astronomy was in its infancy, regarded such language as the language not merely of poetry, but of scientific truth. See Whewell's "Philosophy of the Inductive Sciences," Book x. chap. iv. "History of the Inductive Sciences," Book v. chap. iii. sect. 4.

We find no contradiction between the Bible and the acknowledged truths of modern astronomy. But we still feel some alarm at the mention of modern geology. We still find ourselves tempted to do in our own day, just what the Church of Rome did some two or three centuries before us, and condemn the heresies of the geologists, as she condemned the heresies of the astronomers. The experience of the past might surely have taught us how unnecessary our fears are. The Book which has been the great instrument of the Divine education of men for so many centuries, can surely take care of itself. It needs no hands of ours to hold it up, and steady it in its high position of dignity and honour above all other books. Least of all can it be benefitted by anything which savours of guile, insincerity, and want of candour.

We have seen that it is to all appearance impossible to doubt, that oral tradition must have played a part in providing the materials of the earliest history. Such tradition would inevitably tend to become more vague and uncertain, as we recede further from the point, when the oral history first became fixed in writing. The peculiarly vivid character of the narrative of Joseph and his brethren leads one to assign this point conjecturally to the time of Joseph. Looking back from that point, up the line of oral history, beyond the flood, we come to the narrative of the patriarchs from Adam to Noah in Gen. v. I would venture to suggest, as a possible surmise, that the great ages of these patriarchs may have been the traditional form which this presumed fact of the high antiquity of man gradually assumed. There was a chasm of

time to be filled up; and tradition by degrees filled it up in this way.

I speak with the utmost diffidence upon such a subject. To me it certainly appears that such a chapter *gains* greatly in interest, if we may bring it into connection with a scientific fact. On the other hand, it *loses* nothing, in a devotional and religious aspect, by such a view. It matters not to us to know how many years the patriarchs lived, and that they "begat sons and daughters." What we want to be assured of is, that even in that early time there were those who "walked with God;" and who, when they had served their generation, "were not," for "God took them." (Gen. v. 22, 24.)

NOTE II. ON SERMON IV.

KUENEN AND COLENZO.

THE English Church owes much to Bishop Colenso for his translation of Professor Kuenen's work on "The Pentateuch and Book of Joshua." But the perusal of that work will not lend to Bishop Colenso's own speculations the support which he expects to gain from it. On the contrary, it will tend to show, how baseless and unwise many of those speculations are.

For, conspicuous among the general conclusions which have especially scandalized and disgusted the readers of Bishop Colenso's work on the Pentateuch, are the two following.

- (1.) His view of the origin of the name Jehovah.
- (2.) His view of the authorship of the so-called "Elohistic document," which is supposed to form a considerable, and *that* the oldest, part of the Pentateuch.

(1.) Upon the first of these two questions he has expressed himself thus:—

"Upon the whole, then, we conclude that there is no single instance in the authentic history, from the time of Moses downwards to that of Samuel, which can be appealed to, as distinctly showing that the name Jehovah was used in the formation of proper names in those days,—except, as before,

the cases of Joshua and Jochebed. And yet, according to the Jehovist, the one name was, from the very first, as commonly in use as the other; and, according to the Chronicler, names, compounded with Jehovah, were common from the age of Jacob downwards, and were even given to converts from heathenism, as in the case of Bithijah, the daughter of Pharoah, 1 Chron. iv. 18. Even if Samuel, or the Elohist, whoever he may have been, did not himself invent or introduce this Name, yet there must have been some reason for the earnestness with which he evidently seeks to commend it to his people, by means of the solemn story of its introduction in Exod. iii., vi. It *may* have been already in use, but not very commonly employed, as the *entire absence*, or in any case, the *extreme paucity*, of names compounded with it undoubtedly proves. And highly approving of it, from the meaning which he himself attached to it, as expressing "He who Is," the only Living and True God, he may have done his best in this way to make it a household word in Israel. My own conviction, however, from the accumulated evidence of various kinds before us, is that Samuel was the first to form and introduce the Name, perhaps in imitation of some Egyptian name of the Deity which may have reached his ears."—(Col., Part II., p. 339, § 446.)

The Name Jehovah, then, according to Bishop Colenso, was "formed and introduced,"—in other words, *invented*,—by Samuel, and was palmed off by him upon Moses! It is one of a series of impious frauds and gigantic fictions, perpetrated in the name of the God of truth by his most devoted followers! Great indeed must be the

credulity of a critic, who can accept such a result as true.

What does Professor Kuenen say on this subject?

"In order to arrive at certainty, as to the meaning of Exod. vi. 2, 3, we must above all things lay stress upon a distinction which is too frequently passed by. Hengstenberg, Keil, and others try to show that the name Jehovah existed long before Moses. In this they appeal to the form of the Name (derived from the old *Havah*, for which afterwards *Hayah* came into use), and especially to some pre-Mosaic names compounded with Jehovah, as *Jochebed*, Exod. vi. 20, Numb. xxvi. 59, *Ahijah*, 1 Chron. ii. 25, *Abiah*, grandson of Benjamin, 1 Chron. vii. 8,—according to Hengstenberg, also *Moriah*, Gen. xxii. 2. With Ewald, I should judge that only the name Jochebed had any force as proof, and should thence deduce that the family or tribe, to which Moses belonged, already knew the name Jehovah, so that Moses did not invent it; which, indeed, by itself would be very improbable."—(Colenso's Translation, chap. xii., note 79, p. 138.)

According to Professor Kuenen, then, the name Jehovah is, most probably, earlier than the time of Moses. So far from having been invented by Samuel, it was not even "invented" by Moses.

(2) Upon the second question Bishop Colenso has expressed himself as follows:—

"The preceding investigations have led us to the conclusion that the Pentateuch most probably *originated* in a noble effort of one illustrious man, in an early age of the Hebrew history, to train his people in the fear and faith of the living

God. For this purpose he appears to have adopted the form of a history, based upon the floating legends and traditions of the time, filling up the narrative, we may believe,—perhaps to a large extent,—out of his own imagination, when those traditions failed him.¹ In a yet later day, though still, probably, in the same age, and within the same circle of writers, the work thus begun, which was, perhaps, left in a very unfinished state, was taken up, as we suppose, and carried on in a similar spirit, by other prophetic or priestly writers. To Samuel, however, we ascribe the Elohist story, which forms the groundwork of the whole, though comprising, as we shall show hereafter, but a small portion of the present Pentateuch and Book of Joshua—in fact, little besides about half of the Book of Genesis and a small part of Exodus.”—(Col. Part II. p. 368, § 485.)

According to Bishop Colenso, then, the sources of the oldest document of the Pentateuch are two:—

- i. “Floating legends and traditions.”
- ii. “Samuel’s own imagination.”

Now what does Professor Kuenen say on this subject?

¹ In his recently published Part V. (chap. ix. § 135), he writes:—“Other attempts at historical composition may, of course,—or, rather, must,—have preceded this.” Does this mean that he has modified the view expressed in Part II., and has learned to admit the existence of earlier documentary sources? Yet in his translation of Kuenen’s work, published this year, (p. 110, note 11,) he writes:—“Is it not more reasonable to suppose that they,”—the Israelites,—“first acquired it,”—the art of writing,—“after a residence of some time in Canaan, from contact with the Phœnicians, *e.g.*, in *Samuel’s* days, and that it was actually taught, among other things, in his ‘School’?” Which of these two irreconcilable statements is to be regarded as expressing his final opinion?

"That, at the time of Moses, the Israelites possessed a literature, is a matter subject to no reasonable doubt, and it is now generally admitted."—(Colenso's Translation, chap. viii., note 39, p. 110.)

"Moses left to the Israelitish people the law of the ten commandments in their original form, perhaps, also, a few other ordinances, in writing."—(Ibid. chap. xxiii. p. 75.)

According to Kuenen, then, the oldest document of the Pentateuch,—the "Book of Origins," as following Ewald he calls it,—is itself founded, at least in part, upon earlier documents, some of which were by the hand of Moses himself. And he sums up his criticism of the Pentateuch thus:—

"The historical writers, whose narratives are preserved to us in the Pentateuch, lived all without exception a considerable time after Moses, and stood thus already far away from the Mosaic, and *a fortiori* from the patriarchal time. They derived their accounts partly from written records, but largely from oral tradition. Sometimes they confined themselves to the reproduction of this tradition, just as they found it; but generally their (prophetical or priestly) point of view exercised no unimportant influence upon the form and matter of their narratives.

"From this follows the duty of submitting each account to careful criticism, which shall take into consideration—

"(i.) The age of the narrator, and the antiquity of his documentary sources, in case he appears to have made use of any such.

"(ii.) The point of view of the narrator in connection with the form and matter of his account.

"(iii.) The greater or less agreement of the tradition, which lies at the basis of his narrative, with the accounts of other writers. Such a criticism leads to the result, that the *chief points* of the history of the patriarchal and Mosaic time are certainly assured verities, but that, with respect to many details, an uncertainty prevails, which, for want of other historical information, cannot easily be removed."—(Ibid. chap. xxiii. pp. 78, 79.)

Such a conclusion,—proceeding from a writer, whose work is (as Bishop Colenso says) "the most recent publication on the subject," and "embodies the results of continental criticism generally up to the present time;" who has treated the subject purely from a critical point of view, without considering the bearing of the New Testament upon the Old; and who is, therefore, compelled by his method to accept the impossibility of miracles and prophecy, as an axiom of the inquiry;—seems to me exceedingly noteworthy. At any rate there is a great gulf between such a view of the origin of the Pentateuch and the rash and hasty conclusions of Bishop Colenso; between a "history" founded upon "documentary sources" and "oral tradition" combined, and a work "based upon floating legends and traditions" eked out "perhaps to a large extent" by the author's own imagination. It is not to be wondered at, that the latter struggles often in his editorial notes against the well-weighed admissions of the former.

The sober results of pure historical criticism applied to the early history of the Jewish race are sure to be interesting; but to a believer in the Gospel of Jesus Christ they cannot be rationally

conclusive or in any way final. For, if that Gospel be true,—if Jesus was indeed the Son of God, the “Word” who “became flesh and dwelt amongst men, full of grace and truth,”—*then* it can occasion no surprise that his appearance on earth should be accompanied by signs and wonders, such as the Gospel records describe. *Then*, also, it can occasion no surprise, that his coming should have been predicted by prophets, and that a nation should have been specially called and wonderfully prepared through a long course of centuries, to receive Him as the promised Redeemer. When historical criticism applies itself to the history of such a nation, it finds itself necessarily in a great dilemma. Either it must proceed according to its ordinary canons, and treat miracles¹ and prophecy² as incredible and impossible,—thus prejudging the whole case, and becoming one long *petitio principii*. Or else it must acknowledge from the outset its inability to deal with such a history; proceed modestly and tentatively; and confess the possibility and even the probability of much, which in an ordinary history it might be justified in pronouncing not only improbable, but incredible. In brief, in the presence of the Jewish history it must either pre-judge or abdicate,—either condemn without a hearing, or renounce its own high pretensions. The real battle, consequently, must be fought, *not*

¹ “Jusque à nouvel ordre, nous maintiendrons donc ce principe de critique historique, qu’un récit surnaturel ne peut être admis comme tel, qu’il implique toujours crédulité ou imposture; que le devoir de l’historien est de l’interpréter et de rechercher quelle part de vérité, quelle part d’erreur il peut recéler.”—(Renan, “*Vie de Jésus*,” Introduction, pp. 52, 53.)

² See Pusey’s “*Lectures on Daniel*,” pp. 231—235.

on the question, "What think ye of Moses," *but* on the prior and fundamental question, "What think ye of Christ?" The solution of every other question will adjust itself to the answer which is to be given to this.

The contrast between Professor Kuenen's and Bishop Colenso's views on the two cardinal points cited above, will tend to show, that, on purely critical grounds, the conclusions of the latter may, to say the least, very likely be wrong; that they are certainly not borne out by the evidence, but are careless and unreliable. But it was reasonable to expect, that a Christian Bishop would do more than take care that his critical conclusions should be drawn with no reckless haste, but with the utmost deliberation. It was incumbent on him either to show that these conclusions were compatible with the truth of the Gospel committed to his charge, or else to lay down the charge committed to him. Most unfortunately for himself and for the Church, he has done neither. Upon his own showing¹ he has destroyed the foundation, upon which the faith of many rests. He has done nothing to supply its place,—to restore and to rebuild. Such conduct would have been blamable in any Christian writer. In a Christian Bishop it is deserving of the severest reprobation.

¹ Col. Part I., p. 147, § 176.

NOTE III. ON SERMON IV.

MIRACLES.

THE impossibility of miracles has been urged upon two grounds:—

(1.) Intuition.

(2.) Experience.

(1.) The first may be dismissed with very slight attention. To talk of an intuitive knowledge of the impossibility of miracles, when it is only in a high stage of intellectual culture of a special kind that men can be persuaded to disbelieve in miracles, is supremely absurd. It is a doctrine which Mr. J. S. Mill, in his *Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy*, seems to regard as hardly worthy of notice. After quoting with approval the following passage from Sir William Hamilton,—“Errors may arise by attributing to intelligence as necessary and original data, what are only contingent generalizations from experience, and consequently make no part of its complement of native truths;” he just adds in a note,—“There are writers of reputation in the present day, who maintain in unqualified terms, that we know by intuition the impossibility of miracles. ‘La négation du miracle,’ says M. Nefftzer (*Revue Germanique* for September 1863, p. 183) ‘n’est pas

subordonnée à l'expérience ; elle est une nécessité logique et un fait de certitude interne ; elle doit être le premier article du credo de tout historien et de tout penseur."—"Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy," pp. 141, 142.)

(2.) The argument from experience is far more worthy of notice.

The uniformity of nature,—the doctrine that every physical event must have had a physical antecedent,—is an axiom of modern Physical Science, and every advance of such science tends unquestionably to widen the basis upon which the axiom rests. And hence it is that, by one of those laws of association which play such tricks with our understandings, it becomes increasingly difficult for thoughtful and intelligent men in the present day to believe in a miracle.

But the axiom itself is, after all, only a generalization from experience,¹—an experience of nature, which is small and insignificant indeed, compared with the whole realm of physical fact, past and present.

"Was man," writes Carlyle,² "with his experience present at the Creation, to see how it all went on? Have any deepest scientific individuals yet dived down to the foundations of the universe, and gauged everything there? Did the Maker take them into his counsel, that they read his ground-plan of the incomprehensible All, and can say, This stands marked therein, and no more than this? Alas, not in anywise! These scientific individuals have been nowhere but where we also

¹ See Mill's "System of Logic." Vol. I. pp. 371—375. Book III. chap. III. § 1.

² Carlyle's "Sartor Resartus," Book III., chap. VIII. p. 278.

are ; have seen some handbreadths deeper than we see into the deep that is infinite, without bottom as without shore."

Neither can the general Law of Causation,—whether itself intuitive, or derived from experience,¹—be called in to aid the demonstration of the impossibility of miracles. For, all that the law demands, is the existence of a cause adequate to produce the supposed effect. The believer in miracles holds that the Author of nature produced the effect,—that He who wrought the whole of nature, wrought also the exceptional part. There can be no question, therefore, as to the adequacy of the Cause.

It must also be borne in mind, that, the more we prosecute our researches into the realm of nature the more we are led out into a land of mystery beyond and below it, of which Physical Science can give no account. We discover what we call "laws of nature." We explain those laws, perhaps, by others still more simple, wide, and general. Be we can give no account, we can offer no explanation, of those ultimate laws themselves. We can only refer them at last to the will of a law-giver. But if so,—if we are obliged to refer both phenomena and their laws ultimately to an Almighty Creator and Lawgiver, it seems impossible for us reasonably to deny the possibility and even the reasonableness of miracles. He who made can also unmake. He who prescribed the laws, can also suspend their operation.

The subject of miracles has been, I think, considerably mystified and embarrassed by those

¹ See Mill's "System of Logic," vol. II., pp. 108—120. Book III. chap. xxi.

who plead in their behalf, that they are not exceptions to law, but exhibitions of a higher law. The word "law" is thus used in a double and confusing sense,—both as the inseparable concomitance of physical antecedent and physical consequent, and also as the expression of the orderly will of a Supreme Being. It seems enough to say, that those who believe in the existence of an omnipresent, ever-working Author of nature, and in his will to reveal Himself to his creatures for their highest good and blessing, will find no difficulty in the miracles of Jesus, nor in those antecedent miracles, which prepared the way for his coming. They will seem natural, reasonable, and even necessary signs of the Revelation, which they accompanied and illustrated. But, at the present day, we must be prepared to believe in God and revelation, before we can believe in miracles.

I hold, therefore, that the reasonable attitude of our minds in relation to miracles, under the pressure of modern Physical Science, is one of caution certainly, but not more ; not hasty acceptance, and not *à priori* unbelief. If any fact or event comes before us, in the scriptural narrative, in the guise of a miracle and claiming to be such, we shall examine it narrowly ; we shall weigh the evidence for it scrupulously ; we shall try to discover a reason for it, in accordance with the revealed moral attributes of the Creator ; we shall explain it by known or natural causes, if we can do so. Further than this, I conceive, we cannot reasonably go. In particular cases we may have to suspend our judgment, or to assign different degrees of probability according to the different circumstances of difficulty, evidence, and possible

error. For example, there is all the difference in the world between the evidence for the miracles of our Lord Jesus Christ, which we may well hold to be (with perhaps one or two insignificant exceptions¹) as certain and reliable as events of the distant past can possibly be; and the evidence for that miraculous lengthening of the day at the prayer of Joshua, which is recorded in Josh. x. 12, 13. For though, on the one hand, to deny the possibility of such a miracle on the score of its stupendous natural consequences seems an unreasonable proceeding on the part of those who believe in an Almighty Creator and Governor of the universe; still, on the other hand, it must be admitted that the evidence for the miracle is by no means conclusive. The writer of the Book of Joshua refers to a book, which he calls "the Book of Jasher,"—a book, which appears to have been a collection of national songs,—in attestation of the miracle. We cannot be sure that he may not have mistaken his authority, or have translated poetic license into sober fact. Neither can we find in the known moral attributes of God that which would seem to justify such an extraordinary interference with the laws of nature, in order that Joshua and his people might "avenge themselves upon their enemies." In such a case, therefore, right reason and true reverence seem to compel us to suspend our judgment. We *cannot* be certain; we must be content to hesitate.

¹ The miracle recorded in Matt. xvii. 27, seems to stand on a much lower footing of evidence than the other miracles of Jesus. It is recorded only by St. Matthew; it has an air of magic and wonderment, from which the rest are wholly free; and it was performed, unlike his other mighty works, for the supply of his own wants.

SERMON V.

THE WITNESS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT TO THE OLD.

Christmas Day.

1862.

REVELATION xix. 10.

The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

IN order to throw still further light upon the question, What is the Bible?—it will be found exceedingly useful to examine two points, which can hardly fail to yield results of great interest and value; namely, first, the nature of the testimony of the writers of the New Testament to the writings of the Old; and, secondly, the attitude which those same writers, being themselves apostles of Christ, assumed towards their own immediate followers and converts. The first of these two questions may not unfitly occupy us to day. We will reserve the consideration of the second for another opportunity.

Now this testimony of the writers of the New Testament to the writings of the Old would be valuable, were it only the testimony of men of like passions with ourselves. It becomes still more valuable, when we remember that it is the testimony of men holier and better, standing obviously in a purer and a higher light, than ourselves. It becomes most valuable, when regarded as the testimony of the chosen companions and apostles of our Lord, and as including his own testimony also.

The point upon which I would particularly insist, believing it to be often overlooked, is this. The Scriptures of the Old Testament were the special organ of the education of our Lord's disciples, after He was taken visibly from them, in Christian truth. In this respect our own position is more like theirs, than we might at first imagine. The Old Testament Scriptures were really to them, what the whole Bible ought to be to us,—the outward appointed organ of our growth in that spiritual truth which alone can sanctify. Our Lord's prayer for his disciples, and therefore also for us, is this:—"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."¹

Let us consider what the position of the dis-

¹ John xvii. 17.

ciples was, in reference to that growth in grace and truth, which was the law for them, as it is for us. Whilst their Lord and Master was still with them in human form, they could refer at all times to Him for the instruction which He saw, or which they felt, they needed. After his ascension, they had, first, the memory of his life and character, his words and works; secondly, the teaching of the Spirit of Truth, sent to guide them into all truth and to bring all things to their remembrance; thirdly, the Scriptures of the Old Testament. These last, rendered luminous to them at once by the life and death of Jesus and by the teaching of the Spirit, became thus the great outward organ of their advancement in Christian truth. The meaning of the facts of their Lord's life,—his birth, his death, his resurrection, his ascension,—stood revealed to them, in the light at once of the teaching of the Spirit and of the reading of the Scriptures. Let me show you from their writings, why I say this.

Turn to Luke xxiv. 44—48. "And he said unto them, these are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding that

they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things.”—Look also at 1 Cor. xv. 1—4. “Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you:”—And then St. Paul goes on to explain what that gospel is, thus:—“For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.”—Our Lord’s words, recorded by St. Luke, imply that the disciples would find, and St. Paul’s words imply that they actually did find, in the Scriptures of the Old Testament the explanation, at least the partial explanation, even of those two most significant acts of his, his death and his resurrection.

Similarly, in the very same spirit, St. Paul writes to Timothy,¹ thus: “But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scrip-

¹ 2 Tim. iii. 14, 15.

tures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." St. Paul would have his disciple Timothy understand, that the "faith which is in Christ Jesus,"—that is, the faith which has Him for its centre and object,—is the key to unlock the Scriptures, and to evoke their power to make wise unto salvation.

Hence it was that, when the apostles in the fulfilment of their mission preached the gospel to their Jewish countrymen scattered throughout the world, they appealed always in the first instance to the Scriptures and tried to show from them that Jesus was the Christ. That the Christ or Messiah,—that is, the anointed One,—should come, was the common belief of the Jews in our Lord's time; and it was a belief founded upon the Scriptures. It was the task of the apostles to show that Jesus, the man whom they had known and honoured and loved, was indeed that Christ; that He fulfilled all the requirements, and satisfied all the longings, of the prophets and great men of old. Take the following passage from the Acts of the Apostles (xvii. 1—3), as but one amongst many that might be quoted in illustration of this:—"Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews. And Paul, as his

manner was, went in unto them, and three Sabbath days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures, opening and alleging that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead ; and that this Jesus whom I preach unto you is Christ." No passage could better explain to us the double office of the apostles in relation to the Jews, which was, first to show what kind of Christ the Christ of the prophets really was; and then, secondly, to show that Jesus, who died on the cross and rose again from the dead, was indeed that Christ.

Hence, too, it was that, when the apostles and elders came together at Jerusalem to consider the terms and conditions, under which the Gentiles were to be admitted into the Christian Church, the liberty of the gospel for which Paul and Peter so earnestly contended, was established at last by an appeal to the Scriptures of the prophets. "After Paul and Barnabas had held their peace," so we read in Acts xv. 13—17, "James answered, saying, men and brethren, hearken unto me: Symeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which

is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things."¹ Such an appeal to the prophets, on such an occasion as this, shows conclusively, with what reverence the apostles regarded the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and how habitually they used and studied them as the organ of their own growth in the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

To what extent the apostles were *dependent* upon the Bible of their own day, it would be both unprofitable to inquire and impossible to define. We may be quite sure that, as they used and studied it reverently, so they used and studied it also in the spirit of freedom and not of bondage.

¹ The quotation is from the LXX. version of Amos, ix. 11, 12. Compare Isai. LX. On the same occasion we find the following remarkable expression employed (Acts xv. 28); "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us." The reference, I cannot doubt, is to the teaching of the Spirit through the prophets, already appealed to by James (vv. 15—17). The prophets,—and, I think, only the prophets,—are repeatedly referred to in the Scriptures of the New Testament as those by whom the Holy Ghost spake. See, for example, Acts i. 16; ii. 30; xxviii. 25; Heb. iii. 7; x. 15; 1 Pet. i. 10, 11; 2 Peter i. 21. Compare Sermon IV. pp. 104—109.

In the light in which they were, they could both do full justice to those older writings, and yet at the same time refuse to have their Christian liberty circumscribed by them. They would use no sophistry to disguise the fact, that the feelings and the actions of even the wisest and best men of the past had been often wrong and mistaken; as of men, in and around whom much darkness still lingered. They would see that God had, from first to last, dealt with them according to the measure of their actual capacities,—never giving them a lesson which was too hard for them to learn, and yet ever leading them onwards and upwards, by a sure yet gradual progress, into a completer knowledge of Himself and of the eternal requirements of his unchangeable moral nature. From the lips of their Lord Himself they had learned, that such had indeed been the principles, according to which the Divine education of their forefathers had been conducted. His own comments upon the Law were introduced thus; “Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time:”—“But I say unto you”.¹ To the question of the disciples,²—“Why did Moses command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?”—his reply was; “Moses because of the

¹ Mat. v. 21, 22; 27, 28; 33, 34; 43, 44. ² Mat. xix. 7, 8.

hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so." No words could more plainly declare both the unchangeableness of the Divine pattern and standard for men, and at the same time the necessity,—felt and confessed by every wise human lawgiver and every wise human father,—of taking into account, and making concessions to, the frailty and weakness of men, with the very object of, eventually and at the earliest possible moment, realizing and bringing them up to the perfect pattern and ideal standard, which from the first had been in the counsels of God contemplated.

But while they plainly saw and would freely confess the necessarily imperfect and defective nature of the writings of the Old Testament, yet was almost every page of them filled to their minds with "the testimony of Jesus." "The testimony of Jesus" was to them "the spirit" not "of prophecy" only, but of the whole. All things pointed to Him; and He was the fulfilment of all. The Law had a "shadow of the good things to come." The history was often a parable of them. The prophets were trying to utter them.

"As little children lisp and tell of heaven,
So thoughts beyond their thought to those high bards were
given."

That it should be so ; that Jesus Christ, crucified and risen, should fill up all the aspirations, all the purest and deepest and truest utterances, of psalmists and prophets;—that the history of the chosen race should present parallel passages to his earthly life, so that, for example, St. Matthew could see in the return of the infant Jesus with his parents from Egypt a fulfilment of the words of the prophet Hosea, “When Israel was a child, then I loved Him, and called my son out of Egypt;”—that the ordinances of the Law should all point towards Him and find their explanation in Him;—*this* could not seem strange or surprising to *them*, and would not seem strange or surprising to *us*, if we thought of Jesus Christ and believed in Him, as they did. To them He was, to us He ought to be, not only “the Christ, the Son of the living God,” but the “*Word* made flesh;” the Word, who “was in the beginning,” and “was with God,” and “was God;”—the Word, by whom “all things were made;”—the Word, in whom “was life,” and that “life the light of men;”—the Word, who is that “true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” To them He was, to us He ought to be, “the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.” To them He was, to us He ought to be, “the

image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature ;" in whom, and by whom, and unto whom, "all things were created," who "is before all things," and in whom "all things consist."¹ To those who have learned from the Apostles and Evangelists of the New Testament, so to think of Jesus Christ, and so to believe in Him, and who have found perfect repose and satisfaction in so thinking and so believing,—it can never be matter of surprise that his image should, as it were, lurk beneath every page of the Scriptures of the Old Testament;—that He should take upon his own lips, and fill with new meaning, the utterances of the true-hearted men of the past, of whose truth He had Himself been the living spring and source ; that Lawgiver and Judges and Kings and Psalmists and Prophets should have been ever feeling after Him, and not altogether failing to find Him ; that He should be the desire not of one nation, but of all nations ; not of a few choice hearts only, but, more or less blindly and unconsciously, of all.²

From the manger of Bethlehem He calls to us to-day, and we ask, "Who art Thou?" The answer is multitudinous. He is the child of Mary. He is the Son of Man. He is the King of men.

¹ John i. 1—9 : Rev. iii. 14 : Col. i. 15—17.

² John xvi. 20—22. Rev. i. 7. Zech. xii. 10.

He is the Lord, the Life, the Light of our spirits. He is the Physician, the Bridegroom of the soul. He is the Saviour, the Redeemer, the Deliverer, the Restorer. He is the "merciful and faithful High Priest," who passes with his own blood through the veil, and brings his brethren with Him into the very presence of God. He is the Word, the Son of the Father; from everlasting to everlasting, the *Son*; from the beginning to the end, the *Word*. In that his eternal Sonship lies the secret of his vast power over the hearts of men. The only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, who is one with the Father, and who knows the Father,—*He* can become to men, "the image" of the Father.¹ *He* can show to men what the Father is.

Look steadfastly to-day at the cradle of Jesus, and mark what a revelation of God is given us there. Infinite condescension, infinite patience, infinite self-sacrifice, infinite love,—these, at least, are there. "Let us not flutter too high," says Luther,² "but remain by the manger and the swaddling clothes of Christ, 'in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.' There a man cannot fail of God, but finds him most certainly."

¹ John i. 18: x. 16, 30: Heb. i. 3.

² Table Talk, p. 50 (Bogue's Edition).

SERMON VI.

THE NATURE OF THE APOSTOLICAL AUTHORITY.

Dec. 28th, 1862.

2 Cor. i. 24.

Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy; for by faith ye stand.

WE examined on Christmas Day the relation in which the writers of the New Testament stood to the writings of the Old. We saw that those writings were constantly appealed to by them, in all their discussions with their Jewish countrymen, and in all the perplexing questions which arose amongst themselves. We saw, also, that those same writings were made, under the teaching of the Spirit of Truth, and in the memory of the Saviour's life, the great outward organ or instrument of their growth in the knowledge of God and of Christ. That they used and studied them with all reverence, never supposing for a moment that the coming of the promised Messiah had abolished their value or rendered them obsolete,

is perfectly clear. That they used and studied them in that "freedom, wherewith Christ had made them free,"¹ is at least equally clear. The Son of Man would not have dealt, as He did, with the question of the Sabbath-day, had He intended that his disciples should continue in bondage, like the Scribes and Pharisees of the day, to the letter of the writings of the Old Covenant. Neither, had they been themselves sensible of any such bondage, would St. Paul have ventured to speak of the Law, as he does;—describing it, for example, now as "the strength of sin," and now as one of the "rudiments of the world," and now as a ministry of the letter only, and therefore of condemnation and even of death.²

There is no doubt, brethren, that if we were "walking in the light of the Lord," as the apostles walked, we should be able to occupy, with ease and safety, the same position towards the Scriptures of the Old Testament, as they. We should read them with reverence, yet in freedom; at once proving them, and profiting by them. If we cannot do this; if we find ourselves perpetually declining to the right hand, or to the left,—either into foolish and mistaken criticisms, or into blind idolatry and

¹ Gal. v. 1.

² 1 Cor. xv. 56: Col. ii. 20: Gal. iv. 9: 2 Cor. iii. 6—9.

superstition; it is because we are yet, to our shame, but as "babes" in Christ, unskilful in the word of righteousness,—not having "our senses exercised by reason of use, to discern both good and evil." It is because it is with us, as with those whom the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews addresses thus:—"When for the time;"—that is, "considering the time,"—considering these eighteen centuries that have elapsed;—"ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again, which be the first principles of the oracles of God."¹

We go on to ask, "What was the attitude which the apostles of Christ assumed towards their own immediate followers and converts? And what was the special work which they were called to do, and in the doing of which the Scriptures of the New Testament grew into existence?" We shall find that the answers to these questions have a most important bearing upon the subject with which we are engaged.

It might have been expected, that all that an apostle of Christ would have to do, would be just to tell people what to believe; enforcing his doctrine, where it was needful or advisable, by miracles. It might have been expected also, that

¹ Heb. v., 11—14.

all that his hearers would have to do, would be just to accept the doctrine thus propounded to them; believing it simply upon the authority, and at the responsibility, of the speaker. Neither of these very natural expectations is borne out by the facts.

And, first of all, as to the working of miracles by the apostles in attestation of their doctrine. There were times, when they were empowered to do this, and did it accordingly. There were times, when "the Lord wrought with them" in this manner, and confirmed "the Word with signs following." But these cases were rather the exception, than the rule. In that age of sorcery and magic, there was danger lest the *signs* wrought by the apostles should be confounded in popular estimation with the mere prodigies of the sorcerer and the magician. The appeal to this method of attestation was therefore, upon the whole, rare. The signs which accompanied the preaching of the gospel, for the most part followed, rather than preceded, the act of belief on the part of the hearers. They heard; they believed; they were baptized:—then "the Holy Ghost came upon them, and they spake with tongues and prophesied."¹

¹ Acts xix. 5, 6.

And, in the next place, as to the authority assumed by the apostles towards their hearers, both before and after their conversion. In reference to this, the words of St. Paul in our text are very remarkable and instructive. "Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand."¹ And just in the same tone, St. John writes, in his first Epistle, thus:²—"But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth." "These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him." And St. Peter's words in his first Epistle³ breathe the very same spirit:—"The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed."

So far then from encouraging their hearers to

¹ See also Rom. i. 11, 12.

² 1 John ii. 20, 21; 26, 27.

³ 1 Pet. v. 1—3.

build simply upon *their* authority, and to receive in blind trust whatever they told them, the Apostles ever strove to bring them to that faith,—that direct communication and contact with the living God,—that fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ,—by which alone both teacher and hearer alike could “*stand*.” Till this was accomplished, there was no real security for the steadfastness of their profession. As long as they were merely depending upon an earthly teacher, though that teacher were even “an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ by the will of God,” they might at any moment fall away. The just could live only by faith in God, and not by any blind confidence, however well placed, in an earthly master. The apostle could be a helper of the disciple’s joy; but he must not *have dominion* over his faith. The faith which is really faith, must be free and independent; free from all human control, independent of any mere human support. It must deal directly with the living Christ; and, through Christ, with the living God and Father of the spirits of men. It must not even stop short at the blessed humanity of Christ Himself, but must press forwards, through *that*, up to the very bosom of the eternal Father. “Though we have known Christ after the flesh,” writes St. Paul, “yet now henceforth know we Him no more.”

Mark, brethren, how this condemns not only that blind confidence in human teachers which is at all times so common, but even that blind confidence which begins and ends with the Bible, and never passes on into living trust in that God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the Bible testifies. The language of the human teacher must still be, what the language of the inspired apostle was:—"I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say." And he that would please God, can only do so by actually coming to Him and walking by faith with Him, believing "that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."

Did, then, the chosen apostles of the Lord assume no special authority, as such? Unquestionably they did; but it involved no dominion over their hearers' faith. What they did was to discharge, in all simplicity and sincerity, their mission or office as *apostles*; that is, as persons *sent*, messengers, witnesses, "ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God." What they did was to deliver their message faithfully, using in the delivery of it great plainness and boldness of speech. "We do not," writes St. Paul, "corrupt the word of God;" that is, the message or gospel of God; "but as of sincerity, but as of

God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ." And they spoke with the confidence of men who could say, as true witnesses should say;—"We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen." They believed that, if their message were only faithfully delivered, it would commend itself to the hearts and consciences of their hearers. "By manifestation of the truth," writes St. Paul again, "we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." They spoke as those who, seeing the light, know it to be light, and can appeal confidently to those around them, whether it be not light. When that appeal was met, as it often was, with incredulity and unbelief, they could only say,—“The God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.” And further, they could appeal with quiet confidence to their hearers, because they believed that “the true Light which lighteth every man” was striving to illuminate them;—that “the Spirit of Truth,” “the unction from the Holy One” where-with they were themselves anointed, was seeking to teach and guide and sanctify *them*. The language of the sect and the school,—“I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas,”—was

utterly distasteful, utterly hateful to them. They asked for no crowded audiences, no trains of admiring disciples. In these things they could not glory. In one thing only could they glory. "God forbid," so writes one of them, "that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

There is one passage in St. Paul's Epistles, so strikingly illustrative of the point which I am now urging, that I will refer you to it, before we pass on. In his epistle to the Galatians,—an epistle, in which perhaps more strongly than in any other, he asserts his apostolical authority, inspiration, and independence,—he writes thus:¹ "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel; which is not another;"—that is to say, which is no *gospel* at all;—"but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." Mark

¹ Gal. i. 6—9.

how St. Paul in these words throws the Galatians, as it were, *off* himself, off their dependence upon himself or any other human teacher; and throws them simply *upon* the gospel which he had preached to them, shining by its own proper light, and by that light recognized and confessed to be indeed the gospel of God. Nay, so decisively does he do this, and in a manner so trenchant and earnest, that he actually puts the case of "another gospel" being preached by himself at some future time, or even by "an angel from heaven," and pronounces that such an altered gospel, even so authenticated, must be unhesitatingly and remorselessly rejected.

Ah brethren, if it had been always so in the Christian Church,—if the church as a whole, ministers and people together, had been always true to its office as the chosen witness to Christ and messenger of God's grace to men,—if the spirit of party, and sect, and school had always been faithfully exorcised, and the lust of dominion over the faith and conscience of our brethren always rigidly excluded, how different would it now be with the world! Instead of a Christianity cooped and penned, as it were, into a narrow corner of the earth, or striving here and there to grapple feebly and ineffectually with the ungodliness and heathenism of the world, surely, even now, the

prophet's words would have been made good to a rejoicing universe;—"The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

I pass on to endeavour to give greater precision and clearness to our conception of the apostolical office, in reply to the question,—“What was the special work which the apostles were called to do, and in the doing of which the Scriptures of the New Testament had their birth?”

We have already partly answered this question, in seeking to define the nature of the authority which they assumed towards their converts. The apostles were Christ's chosen “witnesses.” “Ye,” said He to them after his resurrection, “are witnesses of these things.” And of Paul it was said at a later time;—“He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel.”¹ And St. Paul with genuine humility states his own apostolical claim thus:—“Last of all *He was seen of me* also, as of one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am.”

This apostolical witnessing falls under two

¹ Acts ix. 15.

heads. It was, first of all, a simple testimony to facts; above all to the fact of Christ's resurrection. The election of a new apostle to fill the room of the traitor Judas, was urged by St. Peter on the ground that "one must be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection." "With great power," writes St. Luke, "gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus." At Athens, we read that St. Paul "preached Jesus, and the resurrection." Writing to the Corinthians, he shows that everything turns upon the resurrection of Christ. "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain."

This point is so evident and certain, that it needs no illustration. On the face of it, the preaching of the apostles is characterized by the straightforward and downright way in which certain elementary facts are stated; and this, above all, as the central fact of the whole, that Jesus rose from the dead. They asserted this on the evidence of their own senses. "We did eat and drink with him," said they, "after He rose from the dead."

There are not wanting those at the present day, who disparage the facts of the gospel, and try to throw us simply upon the ideas contained in them, as though we could afford to part with the

facts without sustaining any severe loss. This is one of those false lights, with which the present age abounds. To part with the facts is to part with the blessed Person of Christ, and to be thrown upon a vague, fluctuating *thing* called Christianity. To part with the facts is to part with that in which men can agree, and to enter upon a wide and shoreless sea of views, theories, opinions, speculations, in which agreement is impossible.

But, on the other hand, a mischief really similar to this, though apparently different, prevails very widely even amongst those who would resent most warmly the imputation of being unorthodox. Where there is no attempt to deny the facts of Christianity, they have yet been often practically disparaged, and, as one might say, well nigh strangled, by an overgrowth of subtle doctrinal statements and nice metaphysical distinctions, in the midst of which the facts themselves become almost lost to view. Thus it has too often come to pass that for the broad gospel of the grace of God, seen in Jesus Christ, and bringing salvation unto all men, there has been substituted some scheme or plan of redemption, giving a most undue prominence to such precise and definite statements of doctrine as have again and again ministered, and will to the end of time minister, to strife and

division amongst Christian people, and not to godly edification. From the language of the apostles of Christ themselves, and from no other source, let us learn what the simplicity of the gospel really is. From their example let us learn to insist, not upon theories which divide, but upon the facts which unite.

For these facts, to which the apostles bore witness, are not mere barren facts, void of meaning and of life. They are full of meaning; and the apostolical witnessing was, in the second place, a witnessing to that meaning. Year by year, to the end of their lives, they saw deeper and deeper into that meaning. But, to the end, there was still a depth below, which they could not sound. After all said and thought, it was still even to them "the mystery of the kingdom of God," "the mystery of his will," "the mystery of the Christ," "the mystery of the gospel." No human line of thought, however profound, could fathom that vast abyss of wisdom, righteousness, and love, which the apostle Paul describes as "the mystery of God." If it could, the mystery would not be the mystery of God; and the soul of man would not yet have found its home and its rest.

Let me show you what I mean when I say that

the facts are full of meaning. The resurrection of Jesus was, the apostle saw,¹ the attestation of his Divine Sonship. And the Divine Sonship was the revelation of a Divine Fatherhood. To declare the resurrection of Jesus was to declare a Son, who had come to reveal a Father. The facts were thus not only full of meaning, but also full of life. They brought the believer into direct communion with God. They were full of the knowledge of God. And in that knowledge of God there was to be found, as the apostles knew from the words of their Lord Himself,² both rest and life; rest for the soul, eternal life.

By far too much of our modern theology has been tuned to the question of the Philippian gaoler,—“What must I do to be saved?” We have taken the terrified cry of a heathen as that, to which it is the first and last business of the Gospel to find an answer. But the Scriptures of the Old Testament, even had we no others, ought to have taught us better than this. The prayer of Moses, the servant of God, is,—“I beseech thee, shew me thy glory.” The cry of Job is, “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.” If we must *begin* at a point far below this, and with the ques-

¹ Rom. i. 4.

² Matt. xi. 27, 28; John xvii. 3.

tion, "What must I do to be saved?"—God forbid that we should *end* there. It is only "in the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," that we can see what that salvation or eternal life is, which He has provided for us. Only when standing in that light, can we learn to say with the apostle John:—"We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life."¹

Why is it, dear brethren, that the writings of the apostles and evangelists are so often a sealed book to us? We can take a text here and a text there, torn from their connection, and frame our own "little system" of divinity from them. We can select a chapter here,—as, for example, the ninth chapter of St. Paul's epistle to the Romans,—or a passage there, and construct therefrom, by the help of the mere natural understanding, a theory of God's dealings with the world, to which we compel every other chapter and passage of the Scriptures to do homage. But when we try to follow the words of one evangelist after another, and one apostle after another, step by step, sentence by sentence,

¹ 1 John v. 20.

word by word, walking in loving fellowship and in sweet yet reverent intercourse with the mind of each in turn;—how do our steps flag and falter! With what weariness, difficulty, and hesitation do we proceed! How much are we compelled to leave only in part understood,—perhaps wholly misunderstood! Why is this? Is it not mainly because *we* conceive of the gospel of Christ in a manner very different from that in which *they* conceived of it; as a message chiefly of escape from punishment, and not as the manifestation of the glory of God; and because, therefore, *our* thoughts are not in tune with *their* thoughts; nor *our* desires, aspirations, and hopes with *theirs*?

In truth and honesty it must be confessed that we stand in these days on a level of Christian truth far below that on which the apostles stood. And yet surely it was not intended that it should be so. Whether the distinction which has recently been drawn¹ between the “inspiration of revelation,” and “the inspiration of the Divine life,” be a true and necessary one or not, *this* at least is certain; that the light with which apostles and prophets were illuminated, was intended not for their own comfort and delectation only, but for the profit, instruction, and joy of all who should come

¹ See Campbell's “Thoughts on Revelation.”

after them. They were, and still are, that "candle" in the parable, lit by our Lord Himself and by his Spirit, to "give light to all that are in the house." If we will not use and enjoy that pure, unearthly light, but choose rather to walk in the light of "the sparks" which we have ourselves "kindled," the fault is wholly our own; and the "sorrow" which the prophet denounces against such,¹ must be ours also.

A blessed thing would it be for our own souls, were we to sit down once more at the feet of the prophets, apostles, and evangelists of the New Testament, and learn from them, as little children, what the gospel of the kingdom of God is, that so we might indeed enter into it. For is it not written;—"Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein?" And a blessed thing would it be for our country, if the Church, forgetting her ancient rivalry with the surrounding sects, would devote herself in singleness of heart to that ministry of preaching the kingdom and testifying the gospel of the grace of God,² which she has inherited from the apostles, who received it in the first instance from the Lord Jesus Himself. Then, indeed, the day would not be far distant, when that "gospel

¹ Isai. l. 11.

² Acts xx. 24; xxviii. 31.

which," in the cross and resurrection of Jesus, "was preached to every creature which is under heaven,"¹ should prove to all nations, what a constraining might of truth and wisdom and love is in it.

¹ Col. i. 23.

NOTE ON SERMONS V. AND VI.

THE POSITION OF THE APOSTLES FURTHER DEFINED.

THE subject discussed in the two preceding Sermons is so exceedingly important,—throwing light, as it does, upon the nature of the Bible, both by showing us how the writers of the New Testament made use of the Old, and what kind of authority they themselves assumed towards their own hearers and converts,—that it seems desirable to give it some further illustration.

1. St. Luke (Acts xxvi. 22, 23,) has recorded the following words as spoken by St. Paul in his defence of himself before Agrippa: “Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: that the Christ must suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.” No words could better explain both the office of the apostles, as eminently one of “*witnessing*,” and the immense value which they themselves attached to the Bible of their own day, as that which, under the teaching of the Spirit of Truth, had been made the great instrument of their own advancement in the knowledge of Christ.

2. In 1 Cor. vii. 10, 12, 25, 40, we find the following remarkable expressions employed by St. Paul: "Unto the married I command, *yet not I, but the Lord*, Let not the wife depart from her husband." "But to the rest *speak I, not the Lord*; If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away." "Now concerning virgins, *I have no commandment of the Lord; yet I give my judgment*, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful." "She is happier, if she so abide, *after my judgment; and I think also that I have the Spirit of God.*"

St. Paul in this chapter is advising the Corinthian Church about some practical difficulties arising out of the peculiar position of that Church, with reference to which apparently his opinion had been asked. He begins by laying down, on the authority of the Lord Jesus Himself, the principle which must be kept steadily in view. More than once, as the Evangelists tell us,¹ Jesus had taught his disciples, that the marriage-bond was, in the purpose of God, indissoluble; and that divorce was but a concession to human infirmity, to be got rid of at the earliest moment possible. St. Paul proceeds to apply this principle to the special case, or cases, brought before him. He carefully distinguishes between the principle itself, as laid down expressly by Jesus, and his own applications of it. He suggests these applications with mingled confidence and diffidence, not as an infallible authority, and justified therefore in imposing his opinion upon others;

¹ Mat. v. 32; xix. 6, 9.

but as one competent to advise, and having confidence in his own judgment, because believing himself to be taught by the Spirit of God.

This behaviour of the apostle Paul, taken in conjunction with what has been already said about the apostolical witnessing, first to certain great facts, and then secondly to the meaning contained in those facts,—is very instructive. As witnesses to the Lord's death and resurrection and ascension, the apostles could speak without the smallest hesitation, in the most positive and emphatic manner possible. "*So it was,*" they could say; "and so," they added, "*it must have been.*" With equal emphasis and certainty they could bear witness to the meaning that was contained in the facts,—to the love and the righteousness of God,—to the grace and the truth that came by Jesus Christ. But when they passed beyond the sphere of these great facts and their spiritual contents, as revealing the nature and the purposes of God; and when they entered upon the tangled and perplexing concerns of ordinary life, where the application of principles, the most positive and certain, becomes often exceedingly complicated and sometimes highly dubious; then they spoke as those who might indeed advise, but who could not command; and whose office it was, not so much to judge for others, as to teach them how to judge safely and wisely for themselves.

This point is susceptible of much additional illustration, entirely in the same direction, from other parts of St Paul's Epistles; for example, from the fourteenth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans. Enough, however, has been already said to justify us in drawing the general conclu-

sion, that while the apostles of our Lord spoke with the highest authority and certitude as witnesses both to the facts of his earthly life and to the spiritual truths of which those facts were the signs, they ever refused to do for their converts, what Romish Priests professedly do, and Protestant Ministers are too often tempted to do,—namely, to take the spiritual direction of their consciences, and to become lords over their faith.

3. It may be asked further,—What light is thrown by the Scriptures upon the nature of those gifts and endowments which qualified the apostles for their office? It is clear that this question, again, must have an important bearing upon the general inquiry into the nature and the authority of the Holy Scriptures.

The work to which the apostles were called, was a special work; and, accordingly, it would require special gifts and endowments.¹ But these gifts, however “singular,” proceeded from that one and the selfsame Spirit, who “divideth to every man severally as He will.” The twelfth chapter of St. Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians is as clear and positive on this subject, as words can be.²

If, then, we are asked to specify in detail the apostolical gifts, we can only reply; first, in general terms, that, whatever they were, they proceeded from the One Spirit, and were intended to fit the apostles for their special office, as the chosen witnesses of Christ; and, secondly, that among them, we may certainly include that of “visions and revelations of the Lord.”³ We

¹ See Collect for St. Barnabas’ Day.

² See also Eph. iv. 7—16.

³ 2 Cor. xii. 1.

ourselves can readily see, how needful these must have been, from time to time, to strengthen them in their sharp encounter with the world's incredulity and unbelief. More than once,¹ in some of the critical moments, and under some of the severest trials, of St. Paul's life, we read how "the Lord spake to him in the night by a vision." He himself mentions "the abundance of revelations," and records how he "was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter." And that which was thus true of St. Paul, we know to be true also of St. Peter and St. John.

But besides these special visions and revelations of the Lord, of which we ourselves have neither the experience nor the need, there was also a gradual discovery or revelation of Divine Truth made to their souls, into the experience of which we might enter, if we would. It is of such discovery of truth by the Spirit of Truth to the soul that the apostle Paul writes thus (Eph. iii. 3—6); "By revelation he made known unto me the mystery, which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;² that the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel." The souls of the apostles were gradually filled with light, through the power of the Spirit of that God "who is Light and in whom is no darkness at all,"—using as his out-

¹ Acts xviii. 9, 10; xxvii. 23, 24.

² The history given in the Acts shows how slow the disciples of Jesus were to receive this mystery,—how gradually they were taught it. See Acts x.; xv.; and Gal. ii.

ward instruments and means the earthly life of Jesus and the words of the Scriptures of the Old Testament. Veil after veil was thus taken away, till they saw, not indeed "face to face," for that could not be in this life; but "in a glass" so clear and steadfast and bright, that to doubt was impossible. And in the very same way, our souls might be filled with the same divine light, through the power of the same Spirit, using as his outward instruments and means, the writings of the apostles, prophets, and evangelists of the New Testament. Veil after veil might thus be taken away from us, till we, as they, "beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory."¹

4. The Scriptures of the New Testament are a genuine product and faithful reflection of apostolical experience. Did they still exist, as for many years they existed, but as separate writings, they would have towards us just the authority, neither more nor less, which the writers themselves assumed towards those, for whose needs they were in the first instance written. But brought together as they have been, by the Providence of God working through the Church, and combined in one volume, they have more than this. In the study of each separate writing we can realize the fact of the inspiration of the writer. But only in the study of the whole, as a whole, can we realize the fact of the organic life or inspiration of the Scriptures.

Had we only one single gospel, or one single epistle, or had we only the works of one single

¹ 2 Cor. iii. 18.

author, it will be seen at once that our confidence in the facts narrated and in the truths revealed, would necessarily be far less than it is. It is when we compare and check one narrative by another, that we arrive at a firm conviction of the general substantial accuracy of the facts narrated. And it is when we check and compare the spiritual teachings of one writer with those of another, and are thus made livingly sensible of the profound harmony which reigns in them,—that we arrive at that deep feeling of the presence of one pervading, uniting Spirit in all alike, which we may describe, in the common religious language of the present day, as the Inspiration of the Bible. And it is this inspiration of the whole that stamps a fresh authority upon each of the parts, and makes us feel, as we peruse those parts separately one after another, not merely that we are having intercourse with “holy men of God,”—not merely that we are learning the “views” of Paul and Peter and John,—but that the Spirit of Truth is speaking to us through them.

SERMON VII.

MORAL DIFFICULTIES OF THE BIBLE.

August 16th, 1863.

PSALM XCIII. 5.

Thy testimonies are very sure : holiness becometh thine house,
O Lord, for ever.

I HAVE spoken to you already about some of the doubts which have been thrown upon the truth of the history, especially the earlier history, contained in the Scriptures of the Old Testament. I have endeavoured to show you how such doubts must be met. They must be met,—not by claiming for the Scriptures an exemption from criticism ; for that would be a confession of weakness, which those who love the Bible truly can never bring themselves to make. They must be met,—not by claiming for the writers of the Bible what they never claim for themselves, namely, a verbal inspiration and an infallible accuracy in every particular and every detail. But they must be met by a fair and candid and thorough con-

sideration of the whole subject in all its parts and bearings; neither detaching the earliest history altogether from the latest, as though they were wholly independent, and as though the earlier could be understood without the later; nor yet making the gospel of Christ responsible with its own life for the literal accuracy of the Jewish history.

This subject has been so thrust upon our notice, and it is so important that we should understand rightly the principles that must guide us in discussing it, that I think it well, before proceeding any further, to quote a few words from one of the great writers upon Evidences of the last century. Let me ask your best attention to the following extracts from Paley's "Evidences of Christianity."

"A reference in the New Testament," he writes, "to a passage in the Old, does not so fix its authority, as to exclude all inquiry into its credibility, or into the separate reasons upon which that credibility is founded; and it is an unwarrantable, as well as unsafe rule, to lay down concerning the Jewish history, what was never laid down concerning any other, that either every particular of it must be true, or the whole false."

"I have thought it necessary," he adds, "to

¹ Paley's Evidences, Part III. chap. iii.

state this point explicitly, because a fashion, revived by Voltaire and pursued by the disciples of his school, seems to have much prevailed of late, of attacking Christianity through the sides of Judaism. Some objections of this class are founded in misconstruction, some in exaggeration; but all proceed upon a supposition, which has not been made out by argument, namely, that the attestation, which the Author and first teachers of Christianity gave to the divine mission of Moses and the prophets, extends to every point and portion of the Jewish history; and so extends as to make Christianity responsible in its own credibility for the circumstantial truth (I had almost said for the critical exactness) of every narrative contained in the Old Testament.”¹

Again, he says, “The truth of Christianity depends upon its leading facts, and upon them alone. Now of these we have evidence which ought to satisfy us, at least until it appear that mankind have *ever* been deceived by the same. We have some uncontested and incontestible points, to which the history of the human species hath nothing similar to offer.”²

Again, as to the Scriptures of the New Testa-

¹ Paley's Evidences, Part III. chap. iii.

² Ibid. Part III. chap. viii.

ment, especially the Gospels, he writes: "When we open these ancient volumes, we discover in them marks of truth, whether we consider each in itself, or collate them with one another. The writers certainly knew something of what they were writing about, for they manifest an acquaintance with local circumstances, with the history and usages of the times, which could only belong to an inhabitant of that country, living in that age. In every narrative we perceive simplicity and undesignedness; the air and the language of reality. When we compare the different narratives together, we find them so varying as to repel all suspicion of confederacy; so agreeing under this variety, as to show that the accounts had one real transaction for their common foundation; often attributing different actions and discourses to the person whose history, or rather memoirs of whose history, they profess to relate, yet actions and discourses so similar, as very much to bespeak the same character: which is a coincidence, that, in such writers as they were, could only be the consequence of their writing from fact, and not from imagination."¹

And, once more: "When we reflect that some of those from whom the books proceeded, are

¹ Paley's Evidences, Part III., chap. viii.

related to have themselves wrought miracles, to have been the subject of miracles, or of supernatural assistance in propagating the religion, we may perhaps be led to think, that more credit, or a different kind of credit, is due to these accounts, than what can be claimed by merely human testimony. But this is an argument which cannot be addressed to sceptics or unbelievers. A man must be a Christian before he can receive it. The inspiration of the historical Scriptures, the nature, degree, and extent of that inspiration, are questions undoubtedly of serious discussion; but they are questions amongst Christians themselves, and not between them and others. The doctrine itself is by no means necessary to the belief of Christianity, which must, in the first instance at least, depend upon the ordinary maxims of historical credibility.”¹

It may be not without interest to us to know that Paley added his dying testimony to the truth of that Gospel, the evidences of which he had in his lifetime exhibited with such force. To one of his intimate friends, a few days before his death, he remarked in his own strong and somewhat quaint way; “There can be no deceit in this matter. I have examined it with all the attention of which

¹ Paley's Evidences, Book III. chap. viii.

I am capable ; and if there had been a cheat in it, I think I must have found it out.”¹

But, besides these *historical* doubts or difficulties, about which nothing more need at present be said, there are others which we may call *moral*. These moral difficulties are to many minds far more perplexing than the historical doubts already referred to. They seem to touch us in a much more vital part. And though some can easily put them on one side, and some will believe that there is an explanation of them, though *they* do not know what it is; to others, I believe, they are a very real trouble and trial, and cause much pain. Anything that can be said to remove such painful perplexities, ought undoubtedly to be said.

By *moral difficulties* I mean all those which grow out of what seem to us either inadequate or unworthy representations of the nature and character of God. Of such difficulties I think we may distinguish two cases;—(1) First, where the language of inspired persons, Psalmists and Prophets, offends our moral sentiments,—as, for example, when Deborah the prophetess curses the inhabitants of Meroz, and commends the treacherous action of Jael, or when the Psalmist prays for evil upon his enemies ; and (2) Secondly, where the

¹ Preface to Coll. Works, published by W. Smith, 1842.

Scripture writers attribute feelings and commands to God, which seem to contradict that perfect Revelation of Him, which we have in Jesus Christ. We will consider these two cases separately. There is much difference between them.

(1) The first case is easily disposed of. Prophets and Psalmists were men of like passions with ourselves; and the light which they had, was not the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, but a light less and lower than that. We *must* judge their actions and their words, as actions and words, by the standard of the Gospel, and commend or withhold our commendation accordingly. But we have no right to judge the actors and the speakers themselves by a standard, which had not yet been given, nor to hold them accountable for shortcomings, defects, and moral obliquities of vision, of which, in the light in which they were, they could not be sensible. Deborah and Barak, cursing the inhabitants of Meroz for their cowardice in the name of the "angel" or "messenger"¹ of the Lord, that is, the prophetess Deborah herself, (and be it remembered, cowardice *is* an accursed thing); David, praying for destruction upon his enemies, and giving his last commissions of

¹ Judges v. 23. The same word in the original is sometimes rendered "angel," and sometimes "messenger." Compare Isa. xlii. 19, xliv. 26; Hagg. i. 13.

revenge to his son Solomon;¹ Samuel, hewing Agag in pieces "before the Lord," with the fierce words, "As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women;"²—*these* are no examples for our imitation, neither can we, without sophistry, refuse to condemn such words and such actions. But if we go on to speak disparagingly or contemptuously of the speakers and actors, and to thank God in a tone of superiority that we are not as they were, we do very wrong. We do well, indeed, to thank God that the *light* in which *we* are, is not *their* light, but a purer and clearer light than theirs; and we are bound to let that Gospel-light fall upon them, their deeds and words, and detect whatever is blemished and imperfect therein. But in the men themselves, in "their self-oblivion," in "their elevation above all low and individual interests," "in the entire and vehement devotion of their total being to the service of their divine Master," we find, as has been well said by one of our great writers, "a lesson of humility, a ground of humiliation, and a shaming, yet rousing, example of faith and fealty."³ Even where our own consciences, illuminated by

¹ See, for example, Psalm cix. 6—20: 1 Kings ii. 1—10.

² 1 Sam. xv. 33.

³ Coleridge's "Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit," p. 37.

the gospel of Christ, must condemn particular actions and particular words, we may yet find, in the persons themselves and in the history which records their sayings and doings, that which is "profitable" to our own selves by way of "reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness." While we give free play, as we are bound to do, to our own moral sentiments instructed by the gospel, we must at the same time do full justice to the heroes of the Old Testament history, and learn the lessons with which their great examples may well inspire us.

(2) There really is no difficulty in doing this; and every truly religious and rightly instructed mind will do it instinctively and without effort. The second case presents greater difficulties. The name and character of God, than which nothing should be more precious to us, seem, here and there in the history, to be, *inadequately* at least, if not *unworthily*, represented.

On a recent occasion I went carefully with you into one remarkable example of this class of difficulties, presented by the fifteenth chapter of the first Book of Samuel. Each case of the kind ought to receive a separate examination. But the examination of one case may suffice to show the principles, upon which the examination of all

similar cases should be conducted. After all, they are but few in number. Of these few we will take this morning one, than which none, I think, presents at a first view greater perplexities. I allude to 2 Sam. xxi. 1—14. We were reading the chapter quite lately in Church. It will be fresh in your memories.

The first hasty impression which we gather from the passage is, that the cruel death of these seven sons of Saul was a sacrifice acceptable to God, and was the means of rendering Him propitious to the land. If this were the case, the chasm between the Old Testament Scriptures and the New would be one, which nothing could bridge over. Before we accept such a view,—a view so unutterably painful and horrible to us,—we must be quite sure that this *is* the view which the writer of the passage wished to convey to our minds, and which is borne out by the facts which he records.

Observe what it amounts to. It amounts to *this*,—that the greatest abomination of heathendom, *human sacrifice*, can be pleasing to God. And this very abomination, remember, was one, for which the Law of Moses assigned the penalty of death,¹ and which the prophets denounced² as a

¹ Lev. xx. 1—5.

² Jer. xxxii. 35; Ezek. xxiii. 37.

thing most hateful in the sight of God. "Take heed to thyself," so we read Deut. xii. 30, 31, "that thou enquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise. Thou shalt not do so unto the Lord thy God: for every abomination to the Lord, which he hateth, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods."

To accept this first impression of the meaning of the passage is, therefore, to accept that, which contradicts not the gospel only, but the law and the prophets also. Let us look more closely into it.

One thing is very clear. David was deceived by the Gibeonites. Their first reply to him is, "We will have no silver nor gold of Saul, nor of his house; *neither for us shalt thou kill any man in Israel.*" When, in this way, they have secured the promise, "What ye shall say, that will I do for you,"—*then* they alter their tone. *Then* they demand seven of the sons of Saul, that they "may hang them up unto the Lord."¹

Another thing is equally clear. This bloody deed of the Gibeonites *had no effect in removing the famine.* "They were put to death," says the historian, "in the beginning of barley harvest."

¹ 2 Sam. xxi. 4—6.

Then he goes on to tell how Rizpah watched the corpses, "from the beginning of harvest until water dropped upon them out of heaven," and would suffer "neither the birds of the air to rest on them by day, nor the beasts of the field by night." The barley harvest at Gibeah would be about the end of April or the beginning of May; and the autumnal rains would commence at the end of October or the beginning of November. For something like six months Rizpah watched the bodies; watched them, as it would appear from the narrative, till little but the bones was left. "They gathered *the bones* of them that were hanged."¹ David, moved by the tale of her motherly devotion,—moved, too, by his old affection for Jonathan and Saul,—commands, and himself superintends, the reverent interment of these murdered men and of the remains of Saul and Jonathan themselves, in Saul's ancestral sepulchre, at Zelah, in the country of Benjamin. "And after *that*,"—that is, several months after the death of the seven victims,—we read, "God was intreated for the land." The sacred historian distinctly refuses to connect the removal of the famine with the death of the seven; shews, indeed, that there was a long interval of time between the two; that they had, in fact, nothing to do with one another.

¹ 2 Sam. xxi. 13.

Unquestionably David did very wrong in surrendering the seven sons of Saul to the revenge of the Gibeonites. It would have been far better to have broken the promise, which had been tricked out of him, than to become an accomplice in such a crime. But here again, David was, I believe, more sinned against than sinning. He had "enquired of the Lord;" that is to say, he had applied to the High Priest in the manner directed by the Law;¹ and the Priest had answered, *as from the Lord*, "It is for Saul, and for his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites." The genuineness of the answer,—(for, remember, there were false priests,² as well as false prophets, who were quite capable of prostituting their sacred office to compass their own ends), is rendered highly suspicious by the facts recorded in the subsequent narrative. That suspicion is increased, when we remember that the Priest, to whom David must have applied, would be that Abiathar, who alone had escaped from the bloody massacre of the priests at Nob, which Saul in a fit of brutal passion had commanded;³ and who would be sure to entertain feelings of the bitterest hatred and a truly oriental thirst for revenge, against Saul and his house. The historian merely records the fact that such a ques-

¹ Numb. xxvii. 21. ² Jer. v. 30, 31. ³ 1 Sam. xxii. 16—21.

tion was put, and such an answer in God's name returned. He offers no opinion of his own upon the subject, but merely shews by his narrative that the method of propitiation adopted was utterly ineffectual for its purpose.

To my own mind the difficulties of the passage are in this way removed, and in a manner very instructive. A careful, patient, and reverent examination of similar difficulties (and they are very few) will, I believe, always issue in an equally satisfactory result; that is, in the total removal of every blot which might at first seem to detract from the glory of *His* Name, who is the God and Father of the spirits of all flesh. As long as the honour of his great Name is untarnished, all is well,—all as it should be.

Perhaps it may be said, "Why enter upon such subjects in this place? *We believe our Bibles*: why suggest difficulties, where we find none?" Dear brethren, *do* we really believe the Bible? I confess with sorrow, that I see increasing reason to think, that we do not believe it as we should, and that it has not anything like the hold upon our minds which it ought to have. I cannot help thinking that our consciences often shelter themselves behind such difficulties, as those of which I have been speaking to you of late, in

order to evade the plain force of the Scriptures, where, under the teaching of the Spirit of God, they would convince us of sin and of righteousness and of judgment. If the Bible be really believed amongst us, why are not its precepts acted upon more thoroughly and more consistently? Why is there so much worldliness amongst us? Aye, and worse than worldliness, positive wickedness? Every now and then, some deed of iniquity, committed not by the publicans and sinners of our streets, but by the scribes and pharisees of our churches, is brought to light, which reveals a root of unbelief and infidelity striking deep into the heart. And can we then say that there is no need to remove the difficulties of the Bible, in order that it may assert its native power more emphatically and more effectually over us?

But, apart from worldliness and wickedness, how, dear brethren, can we say that the Bible is really believed amongst us, so long as there are any in a Christian congregation, who turn a deaf ear, time after time, to the command of Jesus, "Take, eat: this is my body which is broken for you: *this do in remembrance of Me*:"—"This cup is the New Testament in my blood: *this do ye*, as oft as ye drink it, *in remembrance of me*."

SERMON VIII.

THE NAME JEHOVAH.

September 11th, 1864.

GEN. IV. 26.

Then began men to call upon the name of the LORD.

THE name of the LORD is the name of Jehovah. What the sacred writer says is ; “ Then,”—at that time,—the time of Seth and Enos,—the earliest times of the human race,—“ it was begun,” or “ men began,” “ to call upon the name,” or “ to invoke the name,” “ of Jehovah.” A comparison of these words with Exod. vi. 2, 3, has made all thoughtful readers of the Bible sensible of a difficulty. We read there : “ And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the LORD :”—that is, as the margin has it, “ I am Jehovah :”—“ and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name Jehovah was I not known to them.” The difficulty is increased when we turn to such a passage as Gen. xxi. 33, and read, “ Abraham

planted a grove in Beersheba, and called there on the name of the LORD,"—that is, again, "Jehovah,"—"the everlasting God." From the passage in the Book of Exodus we might infer that the name "Jehovah" was a name altogether new in the time of Moses; while from passages in the Book of Genesis it appears to have been known to Jacob and Isaac and Abraham, and even to the men before the Flood. The difficulty is indeed softened down and somewhat evaded, so far as the English reader is concerned, by the translation of the name Jehovah into the less striking name "LORD." But this will be the case, only so long as he forgets, or does not know, that the word "LORD," written with capital letters, is the rendering—the very inadequate rendering—of the Hebrew name "Jehovah;" while the same word, written not with capital, but with small letters, the "L" only being capital, is the rendering, and a very sufficient rendering, of another name of God, implying just what our English word "Lord" implies, namely, the relation of master and servant.

I have brought this subject before you, because it seems to me to be one of those many difficulties, which admit of a very satisfactory solution; and which, in the endeavour to solve them, yield a rich harvest of interest and profit. On the face of

it, it would appear from Exod. vi. 3, that the name Jehovah was altogether unknown until the time of Moses; whereas, from the Book of Genesis it appears, that the name was freely used from the very earliest times. It has been urged by way of solution of the difficulty, that the usage of the name in the Book of Genesis is an anachronism;¹ that is to say, that a later writer, perhaps Moses himself, to whom the name was quite familiar, in recording the events of those earlier times, used the name Jehovah, where he ought properly to have used another name. This is unquestionably a satisfactory solution, and the true solution, of the difficulty in *some* cases; but only in some cases. There are one or two places in the Book of Genesis, where the writer uses the name "Jehovah;" while those, about whom he writes, clearly used by his own shewing another name. Gen. xvi. 11 is an instance in point. We read there, "The angel of Jehovah said unto Hagar, Behold, thou shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name *Ishmael*,"—[that is, "*God* shall hear," not "*Jehovah* shall hear,"]—"because Jehovah hath heard thy affliction." And the sacred writer adds in v. 13, "She called the name of Jehovah that spake unto her, Thou God seest me." Hagar, it is clear, used the

¹ "Mosaic Origin of the Pentateuch Considered," pp. 123, 124.

name "God." The later writer, in describing the event, uses the name "Jehovah."

But this solution of the difficulty, though adequate to a certain extent and in some cases, is wholly inadequate to explain all the cases in which the name Jehovah is used of an earlier time than that of Moses. For example, it fails to explain the words of our text, "Then began men to call upon the name of Jehovah."¹ We must look, I think, further and deeper than this, to find a really satisfactory explanation of this apparent perplexity.

Let us turn again to the passage in Exodus (iv. 2, 3), and ascertain exactly what it is that is there stated. We read, "And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am Jehovah: and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of"—the words "the name of" are printed, you see, in italics, to shew that they are supplied

¹ It has been doubted whether this expression implies an acquaintance with the name Jehovah. Kuenen says, (chap xii. note 84),—rightly, I think:—"If we compare Gen. xii. 8, xiii. 4, xxi. 33, xxvi. 25, there can be no doubt about the meaning of these words. With Enos began the formal and solemn adoration of Jehovah in word and act, *i. e.* prayer and sacrifice. That such an adoration involves acquaintance with the name Jehovah, follows most plainly from the expression, 'Upon,' or 'in,' 'the name:' *i. e.* properly, 'making use of the name Jehovah.'"

by the translators and are not to be found in the original; it would be better to supply "in the character of,"—"I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, *as God Almighty*," or, "in the character of the Almighty One;" "but by my name Jehovah,"—or rather, "but as to my name Jehovah I was not known to them."¹ In other words, "God had revealed Himself to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as the Almighty: He had not revealed Himself as Jehovah."

We must inquire, next, into the meaning and derivation of this great name *Jehovah*; a name which the Jews of old counted, and still count, so awful and so sacred, that they never can bring

¹ "The somewhat strange construction,"—writes Kuenen (chap. xii. note 79),—"and I, my name Jehovah, was not known to them,"—is explained from passages such as Ps. iii. 4, xvii. 10, xxxii. 8, xlv. 2, cix. 2, cxlii. 1, where with one verb a double nominative is connected, of which the one denotes the proper subject, the other *that* part of the subject to which the action of the verb belongs. Thus we have Ps. iii. 4, 'I call unto Jehovah with my voice,' where it stands properly, 'I, my voice, call unto Jehovah.' So in the other passages. The sense of Ex. vi. 3, therefore, can only be this: 'I was not known to them, as far as concerns my name Jehovah.'

"According to the Hebrew, there exists a very close connection between the *name* and the *nature* of a person or thing. The name is not accidental or arbitrary, but the expression of the nature. The *not knowing God by the name Jehovah* is, therefore, equivalent to the *not knowing God's nature, as this expresses itself in the name Jehovah*."

themselves to pronounce it, but always, even in the reading of the Scriptures, substitute another name for it. Partly owing to this fact, and partly owing to a certain peculiarity of the Hebrew language, the true pronunciation of the name has been lost; and we can only say that in pronouncing it "Jehovah," we are almost certainly pronouncing it wrong. This, however, matters very little. For, about the *meaning* of the name we can be as certain, as we must be content to be uncertain about the pronunciation of it. As that name of God, by which He was pleased to reveal Himself to Moses, we have, there is no doubt, the true definition and explanation of it, in the words of Exod. iii. 14, 15. "God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel,—*Jehovah*, God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations." There can be no doubt that, to Moses and the children of Israel, the name "Jehovah" was to be defined and explained by the words, "I AM," "I AM BECAUSE I AM." There can be no doubt, also, that

these words describe God as the "Eternal," the "Unchangeable," the "Selfsame;" at once Self-existent and Immutable. The name "Jehovah" was to call up in the hearts of the Israelites these great thoughts concerning God.

Now here a line of thought opens up to us, which is very interesting, but which we must be content to indicate, without pursuing far. The national covenant and the national existence were based, as the history clearly shows, upon this revelation of God as Jehovah. But also, upon this name Jehovah *the whole system of sacrifice was built*. By the power of this name, sacrifice was rescued from those corruptions and perversions, of which it is so susceptible. When the Israelite brought his sacrifice, he brought it to Jehovah, the Selfsame, the Unchangeable One; not to a fickle, changeable God, such as those to whom heathen sacrifices were offered, and offered for the express purpose of persuading those gods to change their minds and relent towards their worshippers. The very name Jehovah forbade the Israelite to think so of *his* God. To the Israelite, sacrifice was the expression of the unchanging Divine Will,—as a Will to pardon, to heal, to cleanse the worshipper. The words, "I am Jehovah," "I am Jehovah your

God;" or, as our English version has it, "I am the LORD," "I am the LORD your God;" meet us at every turn in the Mosaic Dispensation. They are indeed the key and clue to the whole of it.

But to return. This, unquestionably, was to be henceforth the meaning of the name Jehovah. So the Israelites were to understand it. So the prophets understood it. "I am Jehovah,"—thus writes the last of the prophets in God's name,—
"I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed."¹ But though this was to be, from Moses' time onwards, the definition of the name,—though it was to be connected with the substantive verb, "to be," and explained by the words "I AM," "I AM THAT I AM;" yet, [and here is a noticeable peculiarity, which throws a flood of light upon the difficulty now before us,] the word itself, by its derivation, is undoubtedly connected with the substantive verb "to be," not in its ordinary form,—not in the form in which it is used in Exod. iii. 14,—but in an older, antiquated form.² The name itself bears in its very structure evident trace of being an older name,—older than the occasion on which it was by God Himself defined, and a fresh wealth

¹ Mal iii. 6.

² See Gesenius' Hebrew Lexicon, sub. voc. *Havah* and *Hayah*.

of meaning infused into it. In short, the word from which the name Jehovah comes, means properly, "To breathe," "To live;" and thus the name itself means, by *derivation*, simply "The Living One," "He who lives;" while, by later definition, authenticated by the Divine revelation of which Moses was the recipient, it means, as we have already said, "The Eternal," "The Unchangeable," "The Selfsame." Thus, the *name* existed as a name of God, before it was taken up, made the subject of a direct revelation, and filled with divinest meaning; just as sacrifice existed, before it was taken up,¹ made the subject of the Mosaic legislation, rescued from perversion, and consecrated to the office at once of supplying the wants of the present, and becoming the shadow of good things that were then future.

In the light of these facts, as it seems to me, the difficulty of which we are speaking wholly disappears. Abraham did *not* know God as the Eternal, the Unchangeable, the Selfsame. He

¹ It is clear, from Gen. iv. 3, that the practice of animal and other sacrifices grew up as the expression of a natural want and instinct. At least the Bible knows of no Divine command instituting it. Abel's offering was accepted, and Cain's rejected, not because Abel brought the right kind of offering, and Cain the wrong; but because Abel brought his in the right spirit. See Heb. xi. 4.

did *not* know Him as Jehovah in the sense in which Moses was to know Him as Jehovah. Abraham did know God as the Almighty; as One who appeared to him,—as we read Gen xvii. 1,—and said, “I am the Almighty God: walk before me, and be thou perfect.” Abraham did know God as the Living One,—as, in a lower sense, Jehovah. Not that this name was ever made the subject of direct revelation to him. It was simply a common and an ancient name¹ for the unseen God. It had come down to Abraham; and he used it, just as he used also the name “God,”—“El,” or “Elohim,” that is, the strong or the terrible One. And thus it was that he “planted a grove in Beersheba, and called there on the name of Jehovah, the everlasting God;” or, as I think it should rather be, “God of the times of old,” “God of ancient days.”

¹ If traces of this name Jehovah can be found amongst heathen nations (Colenso, Part v., chap. xix., and Appendix iii), it will only tend to bear out the accuracy of the Scriptural narrative, and to confirm the view taken in this Sermon. See, for example, Gen. xxvi. 26—29. It has yet to be shown by the Critical School, that the writer of Exod. vi. 3, meant to say that the name Jehovah had no existence prior to the revelation made to Moses and gathered up in the higher *definition* of the name. If “the compiler” of the Books of Genesis and Exodus, whoever he may have been, had so understood the passage, how could he have been content to leave so glaring a contradiction on the very face of his work?

And now let us turn to the text, which tells us when and how this name Jehovah first arose. It came into existence, it would seem, as soon as there were human beings to use it. Eve, when she gave birth to her firstborn child, said, "I have gotten a man from,"—or, rather, "with," that is, "by the help of,"—"Jehovah;" "by the help of Him who lives, and in whom is life." What have we, brethren, in this fourth chapter of the Book of Genesis? We have, have we not, the first traces of the history of the human race; a family history, with its sins, its sorrows, and its joys; records of the first birth and the first death; of marrying and giving in marriage. It was birth and death that taught men to speak of the unseen God as Jehovah, the Living One. What a wonder and a mystery must not the first birth and the first death have been to those who witnessed them! Even *to us*, after all our familiarity with them, they are still mysterious, still full of wholesome awe. They seem, even to us, to connect the visible with the invisible,—the present with the past and the future. The joy and the sorrow of them alike drive us to God. The mother may still say of her newborn child, like the first mother Eve, "I have gotten a man with Jehovah." And the mourner must still lay the beloved body in the

ground, and calm the swelling grief with the thought of Him who *lives* and can conquer death.

These thoughts are not bred of fancy, brethren. God has, from the first and all along, been teaching men lessons about Himself through the outward sacred ordering of human life, through birth and through death, through joy and through sorrow. It was thus that He led them to think of Him as Jehovah, the Living One, and to call upon Him, in prayer and thanksgiving, as such. They, too, however many thousands of years ago they may have lived, were men and women of like passions with ourselves. It was anguish to them, as it is to us, to lay their dear ones in the cold earth, or commit them (as was so often the practice) to the devouring flames. It was joy to them, as it is to us, when a child was born into their households. The joy of birth made them think of that Living One, who breathes the breath of life into the newborn child. The grief of death made them think of Him, who has resumed the life which He gave; but who, as surely as He gave and took away, can restore. They called Him Jehovah, the Living One. And, hundreds or thousands of years afterwards, that sacred name was consecrated afresh, replenished with new meaning, and made the basis of a nation's life and a world's

hopes. The Living One, who *lives* indeed, but who might be fickle, mutable, placable, was shewn to be the Eternal, the Unchangeable, the Self-same; One, "who is and was and is to come;"¹ One, who reveals Himself finally and for ever in that Jesus Christ, who is "the same yesterday and to-day and for ever,"² as "the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."³

Brethren, we must be content to learn, even as those ancient forefathers of the race learned, from the common providential ordering of human life. With *us* it need not be, as it was with them, a dim groping in the dark,—a "seeking the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him."⁴ For *us*, the page is open and light falls upon it, that whoso runs may read. Behind the veil,—unseen indeed, but not unknown, because imaged faithfully in every feature by Jesus Christ the Son,—there stands that "Living God, who giveth us all things richly to enjoy,"⁵ that "Father" who "chasteneth us for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness."⁶

¹ Rev. i. 8.² Heb. xiii. 8.³ James i. 17.⁴ Acts xvii. 27.⁵ 1 Tim. vi. 17.⁶ Heb. xii. 10.

SERMON IX.¹

THE MOSAIC LEGISLATION.

July 26th, 1863.

HEB. IV. 8—11.

For if Joshua had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

I BELIEVE that nothing but good will result in the end from that severe cross-examination, to which the early history of the Children of Israel has lately been, in so public a manner, subjected. The fact is, we have been too apt of late years to regard the early Jewish history from one single and exclusive point of view, namely, the Typical. We have seen in it only a long series and a vast array of types, pointing onwards to the great Antitype who was to be. This exclusive way of viewing the history has tended to make it

¹ This Sermon was written in the summer of 1863, while the Confederate cause was still far from hopeless. It has not been thought necessary to alter the allusions.

exceedingly unreal to us. It has lost that human interest which other history has. We are now paying the penalty of this onesidedness and exclusiveness, in being told that the history *is* unreal. If we are to *feel* its reality again, it must be through the study not of its typical, but of its purely human aspect; as the history of the birth and growth and education of an actual nation,—called, indeed, to do a special work in the world, but not on that account losing its natural and thoroughly human character.

This, which is true more or less of the whole early history, from Abraham almost to David, is eminently true of the period spent in the wilderness, and of the Mosaic Law. The whole Mosaic economy, with its laws, sacrifices, tabernacle, and priesthood, has been too much viewed simply as “a shadow of the good things to come,” without any regard being paid to its adaptation to the actual wants of the people, for whose immediate government and regulation it was intended. Out of this narrow onesidedness of view there has resulted not only that sense of unreality, to which I have just referred, but also a curious endeavour, from time to time repeated even in modern history, to put the Mosaic system into practical operation

¹ Heb. x. I.

under circumstances for which it was never intended and to which it was utterly unsuited. The Mosaic Law being regarded as the Divine perfection of Law, it has been argued that all systems of law ought to be conformed to it as their model. The early history of our North American colonies would furnish examples of this curious perversion of the meaning and intention of the Mosaic economy. And recently it has been asserted that the same fruitless and unprofitable experiment is being tried at this moment in a distant quarter of the globe.¹

In order to help you to feel the reality, and to appreciate the value of that part of the history of the children of Israel which is recorded in the Books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, I propose to speak to you this morning about the Mosaic Law, with the special object of shewing its adaptation to the actual wants of the nation to which it was given,—its wonderful sagacity, and its remarkable humanity.

In order distinctly to perceive and sufficiently to admire the sagacity of the heaven-taught Legislator, we must recall to mind the condition of the people for whom he was called to legislate. They were, in brief, a nation of slaves, just eman-

¹ Colenso, Part II., p. 170, note.

cipated from bondage. That bondage must have lasted during at least two generations of Israelites. It may have lasted much longer. But at any rate it had lasted long enough to produce the natural and inevitable effects of slavery, namely, widespread demoralization, a debasement deeply ingrained.

The slavery of the children of Israel in Egypt can perhaps hardly be compared to the slavery of the negro and mulatto races in the Confederate States of North America. It did not apparently go the accursed length of interfering with the family relations. It allowed a certain elementary organization, under heads of families and elders of tribes,¹ to exist amongst the subject race. It confined itself to exacting forced labour from *men*. Still, with these large deductions and abatements, the effect of slavery at the present day in America may help us to realise the effect of their Egyptian bondage on the children of Israel. All the noble qualities which freedom engenders, had disappeared. They had become abject, cowardly, superstitious, false-hearted, — counting physical pain, hardship, and privation the greatest of all evils, and physical comfort, enjoyment, and ease, the greatest of all blessings.

¹ Exod. iii. 16, 18; xii. 3, 21.

Those who are only moderately versed in the history will remember many incidents in the narrative which reveal these characteristic marks of their debasement to us. Does their great Leader leave them to themselves for a few days? They are not slow to return to the idolatrous calf-worship of Egypt.¹ Is it a question of entering into the promised land, and conquering it by force from its inhabitants? Their heart dies down at the thought, and they are ready with their pitiful wail of cowardice, "Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness! And wherefore hath the LORD brought us into this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? Were it not better for us to return into Egypt? Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt."² Is there a deficiency of animal food, calling only for a moderate amount of self-control? Straightway, to use the historian's words, they fall "a lusting," and "weep again," and say, "Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick: but now our soul is dried

¹ Exod. xxxii. 1—6.

² Numb. xiii. 30—xiv. 4.

away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes."¹

In addition to this, we must not forget to take into account the effect which, apart from their servitude, their long residence in Egypt and contact with the Egyptians would necessarily have upon the minds of the Israelites. The Egyptians, though a very remarkable and a highly cultivated people, were nevertheless grossly idolatrous in their forms of worship. Idolatry and licentiousness have always gone hand in hand; and the Egyptians were no exceptions to this rule. I believe there is no doubt that their religious or philosophical creed included the immortality of the soul and a future state of rewards and punishments. This has an important bearing, as I shall hope to shew you by-and-by, upon the legislation of Moses. They were scrupulously clean and fastidious in their persons and habits; and seem to have regarded with great disgust and abhorrence the servile Hebrew race, so different from themselves in these respects.²

Depraved by long servitude; corrupted by contact with the idolatrous and licentious rites of the Egyptians; then suddenly emancipated from the

¹ Numb. xi. 4—6.

² Stanley's "Lectures on the Jewish Church," p. 116.

restraints of their servile condition;—such were the children of Israel when they came under the legislation, given amidst the thunderings and lightnings of Mount Sinai. “What a hopeless task,” one would have said, “to legislate for such a people!” Study that legislation with these thoughts in your mind, and you will be deeply impressed at once with its historical reality and with its divine wisdom.

It is hard, nay impossible, to do anything like justice to a subject so grand as this. Nevertheless, I must endeavour, God helping me, to communicate to your minds the impression with which my own is full.

The thought which inspires the whole legislation of Moses, is that of the living presence of God, and of his deep, abiding concern in the affairs of men. The Israelite was to be made to feel that God was about his path and about his bed; that he lived and moved and had his being *in* God, and *to* God, and *before* God. Instead of the daily task, and the tale of bricks, and the lash of the overseer compelling the hateful labour,¹ he is to think of that Unchangeable, Eternal God,—the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob,—under whose eye he at every moment is, and to

¹ Exod. i. 13, 14; v. 13, 14.

whom he is for every action responsible. The service of the taskmaster is replaced by the service of One, whom to obey is to be free indeed. License, the slave's notion of freedom, is thus corrected, and elevated into true liberty.

This conception of a Living Personal God, a Righteous and a Holy Being, who cares for men, watches over them, is interested in all their concerns, chastens, corrects, and blesses them, is the soul of true religion always. It is this faith which elevates, refines, and purifies; and makes men truly men. For "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth,"¹ but in faith in the living God. This was the faith which justified Abraham. This was the faith which upbore Moses first, and all the glorious line of prophets who came after him. The language of Elijah expresses the spirit which animated and sustained them all; "As the Lord God of Israel LIVETH, *before whom* I stand."²

We cannot tell how far the Egyptian belief in the soul's immortality and a judgment after death was confined to their priests, or was communicated to the common people, and may therefore have been learned by the Israelites. Undoubtedly it must have been known, as all the Egyptian

¹ Luke xii. 15.

² 1 Kings xvii. 1.

lore was, to Moses,—a man “learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians.”¹ The remarkable thing is that it plays no part in the Mosaic legislation. That legislation deals entirely with this life,—the present life. It speaks of a present God, who says, “Be ye holy; for I am holy.”² Herein the divine inspiration of the lawgiver is, I conceive, most clearly displayed. It is the present, not the future, that ever weighs most with men, and exercises the greatest influence on their conduct. Faith in the immortality of the soul and in a future judgment must, if it is to exercise any moral power for good, be built upon faith in a present living God, who is even now the righteous Judge of men, and who has taken them into a real spiritual relation to, or covenant with, Himself. Where there is this faith, *there*, as our Lord Jesus Christ has taught us, the notion of annihilation becomes incredible.³ Those who have learned to walk *with* God and to live *to* God, as the prophets and holy men of old did, now and in this life, can trust themselves to Him for ever and ever; can be sure that they will “wake up after his likeness,” and “be satisfied with it.”⁴

Look how the foundation of all the subsequent

¹ Acts vii. 22.

² Luke xx. 37, 38.

³ Levit. xi. 44, xix. 2, xx. 7.

⁴ Psalm xvii. 15.

legislation is laid in the proclamation, with which the twentieth chapter of the Book of Exodus opens, "I am the LORD thy God," or, "I am Jehovah, thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." The revelation of the righteous LORD, who has cared for these miserable slaves in their bondage, and has released them from it in order that they may be his free and righteous servants,—*this* is the foundation upon which everything is built, and this is the object which the whole legislation is designed to accomplish.

And in order to accomplish this object, the Divine legislation follows the people through all the circumstances and events of life with a curious minuteness of regulation, which to us, in our stage of culture and with the light of the Gospel, would be intolerable. The emancipated slave must be made to feel, in the infancy of his powers of self-control and self-government, that he is under the restraints of law,—that he is not at liberty merely to please himself. If he wishes to offer sacrifice, he must do it in a prescribed manner, from which no deviation is allowed.¹ If he incurs defilement, ceremonially or otherwise, he must be cleansed in a particular way. The very food that he may

¹ Levit. i., ii., iii.

eat is not left entirely to his own discretion.¹ Sanitary regulations, too, are not forgotten by the legislator; as indeed was most needful in the case of a people, amongst whom, owing probably to their depressed moral and physical condition in Egypt, and the peculiar nature of their enforced labour, the horrible disease of leprosy had been generated.² In everything, the care of the legislator is conspicuous; namely, to discipline, to educate, and to elevate a degraded race, and thus to fit them for playing the great part in the world's history, to which the Providence of God had called them. Unite this plain, practical, common sense view of the Mosaic legislation with the grand typical view to which I have already alluded; see the magnificent double purpose present to the Divine mind, and executed so perfectly in both its parts; and you will form some conception of the wondrous way in which that Divine legislation at once recognizes the past, adapts itself to the present, and foreshadows the future.

I have spoken not only of the marvellous sagacity, but also of the great humanity of the laws given to the children of Israel, immediately

¹ Lev. xi.

² Stanley's "Jewish Church," p. 94. Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, Art. *Leprosy*.

upon their escape from their Egyptian bondage. I will select an example of this, and will choose one which has attracted some notice of late.

In Exod. xxi. 20, 21, we read, "If a man smite his servant, or his maid, with a rod, and he die under his hand; he shall be surely punished. Notwithstanding, if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished: for he is his money." It has been argued from this passage that the Mosaic law was cruelly severe to the slave, and regarded him,—as the law of the Slave States of North America does at this day,—as little better than a chattel. But to argue thus is to do the law of Moses a great injustice. The particular enactment just referred to, is but one of a large number of enactments, by which the already existing institution of slavery was checked and controlled. Were the laws of Moses with reference to slavery enacted at this moment in the southern states of North America, the present condition of the slave would be unspeakably improved, and the institution would unquestionably tend gradually to die out. Let us examine this point a little more closely.

The whole legislation of Moses rests, as I have already said, upon the revelation of that Eternal, Unchangeable God, who had brought the Israelite

“out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.” Upon this revelation, as you will see by turning to the twentieth chapter of the Book of Exodus, is built, first of all, the decalogue, or the law of the ten commandments, which has continued ever since the imperishable moral law of the foremost of the human race. Even in the decalogue the condition of the slave is not neglected. He is to be allowed to rest on the seventh day, as well as his master. And in the repetition of the law, in Deuteronomy, these significant words are added to the fourth commandment, “And remember that thou wast a servant,” or “slave,” “in the land of Egypt.”¹

Passing on from this general principle of care for the slave, contained in the decalogue, to the special enactments bearing upon the institution of slavery, you will find, in the twenty-first chapter of the Book of Exodus and elsewhere, many positive laws, all tending to mitigate, to regulate, and ultimately to abolish the institution. To steal and sell a man is a crime punishable with death:² in other words, the slave-trade of modern times is a capital crime according to the Mosaic law. Again, the master who kills his slave is to be “surely punished,”³ that is, as is clear from the

¹ Deut. v. 15. ² Exod. xxi. 16. ³ Exod. xxi. 20.

expression used in the original, with death. Again, the master who maims or disfigures his slave, even were it only by the loss of a tooth, is bound by law to give him his freedom.¹ Again, the slave who runs away from his master is not to be returned to him, but is to be allowed to live where he pleases: in other words, there is no such thing as a "Fugitive Slave Law" in the Mosaic legislation.² Again, after six years of service, came the year of release, when the slave of Hebrew extraction became at once free, unless he chose of his own accord to stay with his master.³

And, in addition to all this, it must be remembered that the slave was, equally with his master, a partaker of the covenant by the right of circumcision,⁴ a recognised member of his master's

¹ Exod. xxi. 26, 27.

² Deut. xxiii. 15, 16.

³ Exod. xxi. 2—6. The fiftieth year, the year of jubile, brought freedom to the slave and his family too, Levit. xxv. 10, 41. For the difference in this respect, but apparently only in this respect, between the servant of Hebrew extraction and the servant of foreign extraction, see Levit. xxv. 39—46. The phrase, "for ever" (LXX. *εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα*) in Exod. xxi. 6, must be interpreted, I presume, as meaning, "up to the year of jubile, whenever that might be;"—otherwise there is a discrepancy between the statement in Exod. xxi. 6, and that in Levit. xxv. 41. It is another instance of that vague, indefinite use of the words *αἰὼν*, *αἰώνιος*, to which reference has already been made in a previous note. See Sermon I. p. 8.

⁴ Gen. xvii. 13.

household, and a sharer in all his religious privileges.¹ Whatever may be the exact meaning of the phrase in Exod. xxi. 21, "For he is his money;" *this* is quite certain, that the slave was protected by law, in a variety of ways, from anything like tyranny, brutality, and passion on the part of his master, and that the institution was made as mild and humane as involuntary servitude can ever be. That the laws of professedly Christian nations should still be so far behind the Mosaic legislation in this respect, is a striking proof of the extraordinary, the truly Divine, humanity of the latter.

And now, in conclusion, let me ask you to reflect upon the scene in which this legislation was given, in order that you may discern, in this respect also, the Divine hand. No scenery could have been better adapted, than that of the neighbourhood of Mount Sinai, to rouse, impress, and elevate the minds of a degraded race. What a contrast between the solitary grandeur of those hills and the populous cities of Egypt; between the fertile valley of the Nile, that garden and granary of the world, and the comparative desolation of the wilderness! Those forty years of wandering in the desert were the school-time of the Israelitish nation. The scene and the lessons

¹ Exod. xii. 44.

were wonderfully adapted to one another, and to the purpose contemplated in the Divine mind. And they were not in vain. There is a striking difference between the spiritless horde of slaves who fled from their pursuers across the Red Sea, and the fearless nation who emerged at last from their forty years' seclusion in the desert and conquered the promised land. There is a striking difference between the cowardly clamours of the first of those forty years, and the bold and resolute language of the last, when the answer of the Reubenites and Gadites and Manassites to Joshua was this, "All that thou commandest us we will do, and whithersoever thou sendest us, we will go. Whosoever he be that doth rebel against thy commandment, and will not hearken unto thy words in all that thou commandest him, he shall be put to death: only be strong and of a good courage."¹

The wilderness life of the Israelites has become, by a true Christian instinct, an accepted type and illustration of human life in general. From the patriarchs of old we have learned to speak of the *pilgrimage* of this life. From the Israelites of Moses' time we have learned to speak of the *wilderness* of this life. *Their wilderness was not,*

¹ Josh. i. 16—18.

as we sometimes suppose, a mere scene of dreary and barren desolation. It had its pastures,¹ its wells, its glories, its interests, its delights. But it was, emphatically and before everything else, a discipline, an education, a preparatory stage for a higher, grander destiny which lay beyond their Jordan. Our wilderness, like theirs, has its glories and its charms, as well as its hardships, its trials, its sorrows. And, like theirs, it is our school. What the Canaan is, which lies beyond our Jordan, we know not. It does not concern us yet to know. It is enough for us to know that "there remaineth a rest for the people of God." It is enough for us to listen to the earnest exhortation, "Let us labour to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief."

¹ Psalm lxx. 12; Joel i. 19, ii. 22. See Rogers' "Mosaic Records," chap. xiv. pp. 118—128.

SERMON X

MESSIANIC PSALMS.

April 9th, 1865.

Palm Sunday.

PSALM XXII. 14—22.

I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death. For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture. But be not thou far from me, O Lord; O my strength, haste thee to help me. Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dogs. Save me from the lion's mouth: for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns. I will declare thy name unto my brethren; in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.

THE Psalm from which our text is taken is one of our Good Friday Psalms; the others being the fortieth, the fifty-fourth, the sixty-ninth, and the eighty-eighth. All of them except the last are

ascribed to David as their author. Of these five psalms, the fifty-fourth does not require much remark. It is a short psalm, written by some person who has passed through severe affliction, in which he freely recognises and gives thanks for the helping hand of God, but not without some admixture of human passion and human infirmity. Its last words are; "*He shall reward evil unto mine enemies; cut them off in thy truth.* I will freely sacrifice unto thee; I will praise thy name, O LORD, for it is good. For he hath delivered me out of all trouble: *and mine eye hath seen his desire upon mine enemies.*" The eighty-eighth Psalm, again, is the utterance of one heavily afflicted, upon whom in his total darkness not a single ray of light has yet fallen. It ends, as it begins, with such troubled language as the following: "Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps. Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves. Thy fierce wrath goeth over me: thy terrors have cut me off. They came round about me daily like water, they compassed me about together. Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness."

Neither of these two Psalms, neither the fifty-fourth nor the eighty-eighth, is referred to in the

New Testament, as having any express bearing upon the life and the sufferings of the Messiah. The seventh and eight verses of the fortieth Psalm, the second of our Good Friday Psalms, are quoted in the Epistle to the Hebrews, as exactly descriptive of the Messiah's life, and of the contrast between the Old Testament and the New, in relation to the kind of sacrifices which are required by the one and by the other. "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the Book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart." The truth contained in these words of the Psalmist is the same which Samuel expressed to Saul, when he said, "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."¹ The Psalmist had made the same discovery. God had opened his ears to listen and his heart to understand. "In the volume of the Book,"—that is, the Book of the Law,—he had found *this* "written *for* him,"² as the one all-inclusive demand of God upon man,—

¹ 1 Sam. xv. 22.

² Compare Hebrew.

that he should do God's will, and should take delight in doing it. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews tells us that this is the one simple key and clue to the whole of the earthly life of Jesus Christ. It was, from first to last, a coming to do the will of God, as a will which it was his delight to do. What the highly-gifted and heaven-taught servants of God, under the old dispensation, had just faintly discerned as his will concerning them, *that* Jesus Christ actually performed. Not the letter only, but the very spirit of the law was actually fulfilled by Him, who could say in action, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work;" and in suffering, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt."

There is nothing in the composition of these three Psalms, the forty-eighth, fifty-fourth, and eighty-eighth, which is other than quite easy to conceive of. Even in the fortieth, high as it soars, in the words just referred to, above the common level of human attainment and too often even of human desire, there is still a tinge of human bitterness, which reminds us that even *it* is, in a measure, "of the earth, earthy." "Let them be ashamed," so the Psalmist writes, "and confounded together, that seek after my soul to destroy it; let them be driven backward and put to shame

that wish me evil. Let them be desolate for a reward of their shame, that say unto me, Aha, Aha." When we compare this prayer of the Psalmist with the prayer of Jesus on the cross, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do;" we cannot but be made sensible of the contrast between the mind of Christ and the mind of the writer even of a psalm so noble and true as this. The same must be said also of the sixty-ninth Psalm. There are prayers and wishes in that Psalm,—imprecations of vengeance, longings for the destruction of the writer's enemies,—which no Christian reader would dare for a moment to apply to Him who "came into the world to save sinners," and who is "the same,"—the same in his love as in every other divine attribute,—*"yesterday and to-day and for ever."* Such a prayer as this, for example, "Add iniquity unto their iniquity; and let them not come into thy righteousness: let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous;"¹ might well proceed from the lips of some deeply-wronged sufferer of the old dispensation, but could not awaken, we are sure, the faintest echo in the experience of Jesus, and *ought* to awaken no echo in us, to whom Jesus says, "Love your enemies,

¹ Psalm lxi. 27, 28.

bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."

But now, when we pass to the twenty-second Psalm, we are struck, the more we examine it, with its very remarkable character. It is not merely that some of its expressions were fulfilled to the letter in the life of Jesus. It is not merely that there is not one word in the whole Psalm, which is unworthy of Him. It is, above all, that He himself adopted its experience as his own, when on the cross He uttered that bitter cry, with which the Psalm opens, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

In the other Psalms, to which we have just referred, the coincidences between the experience of the writer and that of Jesus can hardly be regarded as other than superficial and accidental. All that is good and true and devout in them was realised in Jesus, to an extent far beyond their thoughts and even beyond their aspirations. "Of his fulness they received, and grace for grace;" every gracious thing in them answering to, and

derived from, a grace that is first in Him. Here and there, too, there is a point of outward similarity in *their* experience and *His*. For example, when we read in Psalm lxix. 22, "They gave me also gall for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink;" we are reminded at once of St. Matthew's words in describing the crucifixion, "They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall; and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink." But even here the similarity is more apparent than real. It is doubtful whether the Psalmist's language is to be taken literally; or whether he intended only to describe the scornful, derisive, and unfeeling way, in which he had been treated by his enemies. It is also doubtful, what the potion was, which was given to Jesus before the crucifixion; and whether the intention of it was not rather merciful than cruel. St. Matthew calls it "vinegar mixed with gall:" but St. Mark describes it as "wine mingled with myrrh;" a stupefying mixture, given from compassionate motives to lessen the torture of the cross, but for that very reason refused by him, who "would feel all, that he might pity all." The vinegar,—offered first jestingly,¹ and afterwards sincerely² in

¹ Luke xxiii. 36.

² Matt. xxvii. 48; John xix. 28, 29. The clause, "that the

answer to his cry upon the cross, "I thirst,"—was, it is most likely, the ordinary beverage of Roman soldiers, and was offered at last not in mockery, to torture his feverish thirst with the sight of cooling drink, but in pity. We cannot therefore, it is clear, rely upon this verse of the sixty-ninth Psalm, to establish a specially close connection between the experience of the writer and that of Jesus, or to lead us to regard that Psalm as, in any special sense, a Messianic Psalm.

But when we turn again to the twenty-second Psalm, the external resemblances are close and literal to an extraordinary degree. Take the eighth and ninth verses of the Psalm, for example; "All they that see me laugh me to scorn; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the LORD that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him;" and compare with them the following words from St. Matthew's Gospel (xxvii. 41—43): "Likewise also the chief priests mocking him,

Scripture might be fulfilled" (John xix. 28), is to be connected with the preceding clause. The fulfilment of Scripture, St. John says, was already complete, before Jesus said, I thirst. To take the clause with what follows, is to make St. John contradict himself in a breath. It is to make him say, that all things were already accomplished, and yet that something remained to be accomplished.

with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God." Take, again, the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth verses of the Psalm, "They pierced¹ my hands and my feet: I may tell all my bones; they look and stare upon me: they part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture;" and compare with them the natural circumstances of the crucifixion, in which the hands and the feet were actually nailed to the cross, and also the following words from the Gospel of St. John: "Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be."²

The Evangelists themselves seem to have been greatly struck with this last point of resemblance

¹ See Perowne on "The Psalms," vol. i. pp. 107, 108.

² Notice also Ps. xxii. 17; "They look and stare upon me;" and compare Luke xxiii. 35; "And the people stood beholding."

between the twenty-second Psalm and the crucifixion of Christ. They draw no attention to the vinegar and the gall of the sixty-ninth Psalm. *That* they seem to have put aside as a doubtful, or at most an accidental resemblance. But when they come to the parting the garments and casting lots, both St. Matthew and St. John call attention to this twenty-second Psalm; St. Matthew saying, "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots;" and St. John saying, "That the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots."

I can see no rational way of accounting for the extraordinary nature of this Psalm,—which becomes more palpable, the more one examines it,—except by confessing its genuine prophetic character. Who the writer of the Psalm was; at what time he wrote; to what extent the details of suffering enumerated in the Psalm had been actually part and parcel of his own experience;—all these are *secondary* questions, although full of interest for us. It must be freely and joyfully admitted, *first of all*, that here in this Psalm we have such an insight into the experience of the

suffering Christ, as only a Divine inspiration, unlike anything that we are conscious of, could give.

The title or heading of the Psalm describes it as "A Psalm of David;" adding the words, "to the chief musician,"—which shew that it was used at some time or other in the services of the Temple; and appending a musical notice of the tune or melody to which it was to be sung. Having once admitted, as we are compelled to do, the prophetic character of the Psalm, it is impossible to subject it very strictly to the ordinary rules of criticism. For example, though we cannot find anything in David's life or David's character, which suits very precisely with such an utterance, we are not able therefore to decide that it may not have been his composition. On the other hand, if we may endeavour to bring it into connection with that particular portion of the history of the chosen race, and that particular writer, with which and with whom it seems best to suit,—it must be admitted that the period of the captivity in Babylon, and the writer of the last chapters of the Book of Isaiah, are most in harmony with this wonderful Psalm. Take, for example, the sixth verse of the Psalm,¹ "But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the

¹ Perowne on "The Psalms," vol. i. p. 102.

people;" and compare with this Isaiah xli. 14, "Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel: I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy redeemer, the holy One of Israel;" and lii. 14, "As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men;" as well as the familiar words of liii. 3, "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised and we esteemed him not." And the whole tone of the Psalm is reflected in those wonderful words of Isaiah l. 5—7, "The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. I gave my back to the smiter, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting. For the Lord God will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded; therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed."

During the period of the captivity there must have been many occasions, when, in that land of strangers and idolaters, the faithful servants of Jehovah must have been reduced to the last extremity,¹ in their struggle to be faithful to their

¹ Compare Daniel iii. and vi.

God. If one might venture an opinion on a subject so doubtful, I should certainly be inclined to accept the view which has often been taken of this Psalm,¹ as well as of those later chapters of Isaiah,² and to assign both them and it to the

¹ See Perowne on "The Psalms," vol. i. p. 99.

² "It is well known," writes Dean Milman (History of the Jews, vol. i. p. 418), "that the later chapters of Isaiah are attributed by the common consent of most of the profoundly learned writers of Germany (a few excepted, who in Germany, at least, bear no very high name) to a different writer, whom they call the great nameless Prophet, or the second Isaiah, who wrote during the exile. I must acknowledge that these chapters, in my judgment, read with infinitely greater force, sublimity, and reality under this view. If they lose, and I hardly feel that they do lose, in what is commonly called prophetic, they rise far more in historical interest. As to what are usually called the Messianic predictions, those which seem to look further, if I may so say, Gospel-wards,—they have the same force and meaning, whether uttered by one or two prophets, at one or two different periods."

The following points are worthy of notice:—

(1.) Isaiah's name is not once mentioned after the thirty-ninth chapter; though it occurs sixteen times in the preceding chapters.—See i. 1, ii. 1, vii. 3, xiii. 1, xx. 2, 3, xxxvii. 2, 5, 6, 21, xxxviii. 1, 4, 21, xxxix. 3, 5, 8.

(2.) The discourse flows on continuously from the fortieth chapter to the end without any break whatever.

(3.) The writer's point of view is the *close* of the captivity, the *return* of the exiles, and the rebuilding of Jerusalem.

(4.) Our Lord Himself never quotes from these chapters as Isaiah's, but always simply as "that which is written", or "that which is written in the prophets;" whereas from the earlier chapters of the Book He quotes by name as the work of Isaiah. See Matt. xxi. 13, John vi. 45, Luke xxii. 37, and compare Matt. xiii. 14, xv. 7.

period of the captivity, and possibly to one and the selfsame writer,—some nameless prophet, in whose actual experience was verified his own touching language concerning the Messiah, “He was taken from prison and from judgment: and *who shall declare his generation?*” Such a view as this seems to fill the Psalm with a fresh interest, while it detracts nothing from its genuine prophetic and Messianic character. It is to *this*, that I wish now, in conclusion, to direct your attention.

The fact that Christ Himself uttered upon the cross words identical with those with which this twenty-second Psalm begins, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”—seems undoubtedly to justify us in using the Psalm as a clue to the great mystery of his own dying experience. To have any clue to such a mystery must be matter of great thankfulness. His own words upon the cross, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do;”—“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”—“Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit,”—do indeed help us much. But they also leave much unexplained; much which this twenty-second Psalm helps us to explain. What, brethren, are the leading thoughts of this wondrous Psalm? They seem to me to be reducible to two: *one*, trust in God in the midst

of utter outward desolation ; the *other*, hope rising triumphant out of the ashes of seeming despair. The Psalmist begins with an earnest appropriation of God as *his* God, and a vehement cleaving to Him accordingly ; though everything is dark and dreary around, and though even God Himself seems to hide his face from him. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring ? O my God, I cry in the day time, but thou hearest not ; and in the night season, and am not silent. But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel. Our fathers trusted in thee : they trusted, and thou didst deliver them. They cried unto thee, and were delivered : they trusted in thee, and were not confounded. But I am a worm, and no man ; a reproach of men, and despised of the people." So runs through many verses the utterance of his deep distress, but mingled at the same time with the strongest expressions of confidence in his God. "Thou art my God," he says, "from my mother's womb : be not far from me ; for trouble is near : for there is none to help me." "Be not thou far from me, O Jehovah : O my strength, haste thee to help me." "Save me from the lion's mouth : for thou *hast* heard me from the horns of the unicorns." At this point the tone

of the Psalm entirely changes. From the wail of despair it passes to the strain of hope. "I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee. Ye that fear the Lord, praise him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel. For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard." And from this strain of hope, again, it rises to accents of positive joy and triumph. "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. For the kingdom is Jehovah's: and he is the governor among the nations. All the fat ones of the earth,"—that is, "all the rich and mighty,"—"shall eat and worship: before him shall all they that go down into the dust bend the knee, and whosoever cannot keep his soul alive.¹ A seed shall serve Him: it shall be told to the generation to come concerning the Lord. They shall come, they shall declare his righteousness, to a people that shall be born, that he hath done it."

"He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied," the Prophet said, writing of

¹ Perowne on "The Psalms," p. 106.

the Messiah. "For the joy that was set before him," writes the Apostle, "he endured the cross, despising the shame." "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me;" so He said Himself. His own words upon the cross enable us to trace the transition, which is so clearly marked in the Psalm, from desolation to hope and confidence,—from the cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" to the peaceful prayer of death, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." But no words, actually spoken by Him upon the cross, enable us to trace the final transition from hope and confidence to joy and triumph. *That* came, we may well believe, after death; when all was over, and the victory won. Then rose up before Him the glorious vision of the future; a redeemed humanity; a race restored, reconciled, regenerated; the great voices in heaven saying, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever."¹

My brethren, such a Psalm as this ought to be a great help to us in the work—often a very difficult work—of exercising a living faith in Jesus as the Son of God, the Saviour of men. Striving

¹ Rev. xi. 15.

to look at the Psalm in the coldest, most unimpassioned and rational way I can, I am compelled to admit,—not unwillingly compelled, I confess, but still compelled to admit,—that it carries my thoughts irresistibly onwards from the writer's own day, over a gulf of some hundreds of years, to that cross planted on Calvary eighteen centuries ago for Jesus the Prophet of Nazareth of Galilee. Reason itself is thus constrained to side with all my longings, and to pronounce *that* Jesus to be indeed the Christ, the Son of the Living God. But remember, brethren, though reason may thus be chained to the car of faith, and forced to confess the reasonableness of faith, reason is not itself faith. In order to elevate the mere conviction of the understanding into the faith which saves, there must be the exercise of *will*, of a *moral choice*, on our part. Hence it is, that faith is the right and reasonable test of men,—that which *saves*,—that which *justifies*. Analyse this matter as far as you can or will, you come at last to *this*,—a positive, determined *choice*, grounded upon a distinct perception of the glory of God in the Gospel of Christ, and arrived at in the very innermost citadel and vitals of the soul. Reason may tarry at the portals, balancing the evidence, and assigning good and sufficient reasons for entering the

temple. Faith springs forward,—*chooses*,—and *enters*: “This God is our God for ever and ever, He shall be our guide unto death.”

So it was that Thomas *chose*, when, looking at the pierced hands and wounded side of Jesus, he said, “*My Lord and my God*.” To such a choice,—not unreasonable indeed, yet one which reason can never wholly account for,—God Himself is calling us, God Himself is drawing us.¹ The power to make it is His. It *is* made, when, looking at the cross of Christ, we can say, “Here I choose: notwithstanding all doubts and difficulties and temptations, I cast in my lot, for life and for death, for here and hereafter, for time and for eternity, with the Crucified. Other lords have had dominion over me: henceforth I will recognise no lord but Him, ‘who loved me, and gave himself for me.’”

¹ John vi. 44, 45.

SERMON XI.

THE SUFFERING SERVANT OF JEHOVAH.

January 17th, 1864.

ISAIAH LII. 11—15.

Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord. For ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight: for the Lord will go before you; and the God of Israel will be your reward. Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high. As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men; so shall he sprinkle many nations: the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see, and that which they had not heard shall they consider.

OUR first lessons to-day are the fifty-first and fifty-third of Isaiah. I have taken my text from the intervening chapter; because it seems, as we should expect, to give a connecting link between the two. I have often wished to speak to you

about the fifty-third chapter, but have been hindered hitherto : because, while fully believing that it speaks of Christ and is only fulfilled in Christ, I yet could not see the connection, which I felt sure must subsist, between its fulfilment in Christ and the immediate circumstances in the midst of which the prophet wrote. I think I now see this connection pretty clearly ; and therefore I can venture to bring the subject before you,—believing that what has been light and help to *me*, will be light and help also to *you*.

I have spoken to you already about the probable authorship of these last twenty-seven chapters of the Book called by Isaiah's name. Whether they were indeed written by the elder Isaiah in Hezekiah's reign, or by some later prophet, bearing perhaps the same name, and himself an eyewitness of the Babylonian captivity, *this*, at least, is certain,—that they can only be understood by placing ourselves at the point of view of that captivity, and looking backwards and forwards from thence. If it was Isaiah the son of Amoz who wrote them, he must have so entered by foresight and sympathy into the nature and circumstances of the captivity, as almost to live and learn in the midst of it. If they were written by an actual resident in Babylon during the closing

years of the captivity, *then*, the writer of them must have been to those years, just what Ezekiel had been to the earlier years of it,—*God's messenger* to the captive people, to teach and admonish them and prepare them for their restoration to their native land. My own judgment inclines decidedly to this latter view. It seems to me to present fewer difficulties than the other, and at the same time to be far richer both in human interest and in Divine instruction. There is something almost painful in the thought, that words so alive with feeling were written by a prophet who lived a century and a half before the events which he describes, and who was therefore far out of the reach of the sorrows and joys, the temptations and trials, involved in them. The words become indescribably full of an undying interest to us, as soon as we begin to read them as the work of an actual sufferer, pouring out his divine message of comfort and hope and warning to those who were fellow-sinners and fellow-sufferers with him. Think, for example, of the words with which the fortieth chapter begins;—
“Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath re-

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ceived of the Lord's hand double for all her sins." Think of them, first, as the work of Isaiah, looking far away into the future, and addressing by anticipation the captives of five generations later. Then think of them as the work of one who had suffered himself in all the sufferings of his people, and whose mission it was to speak comfortably to them, and to announce to them in God's name, that the time of deliverance was near. To me, I confess, it appears that the latter view is as much more solemn and impressive, as it is certainly more full of human interest than the former.

The chapter which has just been read in Church speaks for itself and requires no explanation, as soon as we place ourselves at the right point of view for understanding it. The prophet looks back and remembers the cup of trembling, which Jerusalem has already drunk to the very dregs. "Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of the Lord the cup of his fury : thou hast drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling, and wrung them out." He looks forward to the bright horizon of the future. "Thus saith thy Lord, Jehovah, and thy God that pleadeth the cause of his people, Behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, even the dregs of the cup of my fury ; thou shalt no more drink

it again: But I will put it into the hand of them that afflict thee; which have said to thy soul, bow down, that we may go over: and thou hast laid thy body as the ground, and as the street, to them that went over." The next chapter carries out this thought still further. The prophet addresses Jerusalem in glad exulting strains. The day of deliverance, he is sure, is at hand. "Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean. Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down; O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion." In the first verse of our text he sees the deliverance actually consummated. The captive Jews are leaving the city of their captivity, bearing the holy vessels with them. "Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord." An interesting commentary upon these last words is to be found in Ezra i. 7, 8. "Also Cyrus the king brought forth the vessels of the house of the Lord, which Nebuchadnezzar had brought forth out of Jerusalem, and had put them into the house of his gods; even

those did Cyrus king of Persia bring forth by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer, and numbered them unto Sheshbazzar the prince of Judah."

So far, all is clear. As to the interpretation of the externals of this part of the prophecy, there can be neither doubt nor mistake. You will easily fill in for yourselves the features of the picture, which the prophet presents to us. The messengers bring the good tidings to Jerusalem. The little, feeble remnant left there, and watching for the arrival of the messengers, lift up their voices, and join in the song of joy. Eye meets eye, and hand is clasped in hand. This seems clearly to be the first and literal meaning of the seventh and following verses of the fifty-second chapter. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth! Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing; for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion. Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem, for the LORD hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem. The LORD hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the

ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God."

So far, I repeat, all is clear, simple, intelligible. It is when we come to the thirteenth verse, that the real difficulty of the expositor commences. "Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high. *As* many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men; *so* shall he sprinkle,"—or, "so shall he surprise many nations":—"kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them, shall they see; and that which they had not heard, shall they consider." Who is this "servant," of whom the prophet speaks? Is he the same as the "righteous servant" spoken of in the next chapter? And what has he to do with that restoration of Israel to their own country, of which the prophet has just been speaking? Two things I hold to be quite certain;—first, that the return from captivity is the subject *immediately* present to the prophet's mind: and, secondly, that the language of the fifty-third chapter is only fulfilled and satisfied in Jesus Christ. *From* the captivity, and *through* the captivity, the prophet, taught by the Spirit of God, is led on into new and deeper views of the Messiah and his kingdom. The

difficulty of the expositor lies in connecting together these two equally certain things. The connecting link is to be found, I do not doubt, in the words,—“Behold, *my servant* shall deal prudently.” Let us see what help the prophet gives us elsewhere in these twenty-seven chapters, towards a right understanding as to who this servant of Jehovah is.

Chap. xli. 8, gives us the first hint upon this subject. “Thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend.” The same thought is repeated more than once in these chapters;—for example in xliv. 1, 2, “Yet now hear, O Jacob my servant; and Israel, whom I have chosen: Thus saith the LORD that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, which will help thee; Fear not, O Jacob, my servant; and thou Jesurun, whom I have chosen.” And, again, in xlv. 4, “For Jacob my servant’s sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee,”—that is, Cyrus,—“by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me.”

Israel, then, is the *servant* of Jehovah,—his *elect* One. The Jewish nation is the chosen minister of God,—chosen for a peculiar work,—chosen to be a great agent in carrying out the divine counsels,—chosen to be a special witness

to Himself. "Let all the nations be gathered together," writes the prophet, xliii. 9, 10, "and let the people be assembled: who among them can declare this, and shew us former things? let them bring forth their witnesses, that they may be justified: or let them hear, and say, It is truth. Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and *my servant whom I have chosen*: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he; before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour."

This was, indeed, the national calling. But on the part of the great bulk of the members of the nation there was, and there always had been, great blindness as to the very meaning of their national existence. "Who is blind," writes the prophet again, xlii. 19, 20, "but my servant? or deaf, as my messenger that I sent? who is blind as my friend, and blind as the servant of Jehovah? Seeing many things, but thou observest not; opening the ears, but he heareth not." A few there had been in every age,—a few there were when the prophet wrote (whenever that was),—who understood, at least in part, the purpose for which God had called their nation, and who strove to enter into it and be faithful to

it. The prophet himself was one of these. It was his great aim and endeavour, as it was of every prophet of God in turn, to realise and to be true to the divine covenant himself, and to bring his countrymen to realize and be true to it also. The more he was enabled to do this, the higher did his heaven-taught hopes and visions soar; and the more did his language become such, as only He, who is at once "the root" and "the offspring" of David, could fulfil.

The more the prophet felt and realized the calling of his nation as "the servant of Jehovah," the more did he feel and realize in his own person what it was to be a servant of Jehovah, and the more did his language become predictive of Him who is the true and perfect servant of God, Jesus Christ. He who "made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men," is, unquestionably, *the* servant of Jehovah. The early Christians felt this very strongly; though an unfortunate mis-translation which has crept into our English Bibles, disguises their conviction from us. Four times¹ in the Acts of the Apostles, the word which should be rendered "servant," is rendered "child" or "son." "The God of Abraham and of Isaac

¹ Acts iii. 13, 26; iv. 27, 30.

and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his *servant* Jesus;”—not, “his Son Jesus.” “Unto you first, God, having raised up *his servant* Jesus, sent him to bless you.” “Of a truth, against *thy holy servant* Jesus, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together.” “That signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy *servant* Jesus.” It is clear from these passages, that the early Christians perceived that Jesus is that “servant of Jehovah,” who alone fulfils the language of these latter chapters of Isaiah. In those chapters, more than any where else, they found the precious truth at once so surprising and so consoling,—that the Christ or Messiah *must suffer*. From these chapters they learned both to know Christ better, and to say with increasing confidence, “Jesus, the Prince of sufferers, is He.”

What has now been said will, with a little thought and study of the chapters in question, help you to understand why it is that the prophet’s language about this “servant of Jehovah” should often be so perplexing. Sometimes “the servant of Jehovah” is distinctly stated to be Israel, Jacob, the Jewish nation. Sometimes it is the prophet himself, or some cotemporary of the

prophet. And sometimes, again, the language breaks away from every meaner subject, and rises into a pure Messianic strain. And yet, at the same time, the connection with the present, with the earth, with some human being, is, I think, never wholly wanting. Here, as elsewhere, prophecy starts from the present and the visible; though it pierces deep into the invisible, and though it passes over into the far off future. Take, for example, the opening words of the forty-second chapter; — “Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him; he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.” Remembering the words of xli. 8, “Thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen,”—we cannot doubt, that the starting point of this prophecy is the nation of Israel, the elect servant of Jehovah. But it passes, almost immediately, into a purely Messianic or Christian strain. So, also, when we read the first verses of the forty-ninth chapter, we are perplexed at first to understand at what point the prophet’s language ceases to be true of himself, and becomes true only of Christ. The starting point is, clearly, *himself*, realizing his calling as an Israelite; but the end of the vision is, as clearly, *Christ*. “Listen, O isles,

unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far; the Lord hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name. And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft: in his quiver hath he hid me; and said unto me, Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified." And so, again, when we come to our text, and read, "Behold, my servant shall deal prudently;" and when we remember, at the same time, that the prophet has just been speaking of the march of the Jews from Babylon to Jerusalem, under their prince Zerubbabel and their high priest Joshua; we cannot but feel, that the prophet must have had some human object in view, and that the "servant," whose "visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men," is not at once Jesus Christ, but some meaner personage; perhaps Zerubbabel, or perhaps Joshua, or perhaps some other, of whom the history makes no mention, by whose "prudent dealing" the nation was restored again to its native country, and made once more in process of time great and prosperous.

But the next chapter passes over clearly into a vision of the true Elect One, the Anointed

Servant of Jehovah. The earlier vision of the Messiah, as the "King" that should "reign in righteousness,"¹ has given place to *this*, the vision of the *Sufferer*, "despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." It was one great lesson of the captivity, to teach the Jews *this*. Himself trodden down and despised, he learns, to his inexpressible surprise and comfort, that the Messiah Himself will be rejected and despised. The prophet, who was entering into all the sorrows, and feeling all the sins, of his nation, was God's appointed instrument for teaching his countrymen this lesson, as he was also himself the first to learn it. But the sufferer is also the conqueror. He conquers through suffering. He divides the spoil with the great, because he has poured out his soul unto death. The same spirit which testified to the prophet beforehand the sufferings of Christ, testified also the glory that should follow.² We know what those sufferings were. We do not yet know what that glory shall be.³

St. Paul, in writing to the Corinthians (1 Cor. x. 1—11), uses the history of the passage of the Israelites from Egypt into Canaan, as a representative or typical history. Just in the same typical

¹ Isa. xxxii. 1.

² 1 Pét. i. 11.

³ Heb. ii., 8, 9.

or representative way, it seems to me, we are at liberty to use the briefly indicated passage of the captive exiles from Babylon, through the wilderness, to Jerusalem; as indeed Christian feeling has instinctively, though with many confusions, used it. One of the most beautiful hymns of the Christian Church, for example, applies it just in this way:—

“ Sing, ye redeemed of the Lord,
Your great Deliverer sing;
Pilgrims for Zion's city bound,
Be joyful in your king.”

If the redemption of the whole Israelite nation from their Egyptian bondage is a fit and striking parable of the great spiritual Redemption of our race in Christ; so has the return of the exiles from Babylon many striking points of resemblance to our life as individual Christians, striving to press onwards, from our spiritual Babylon, towards the true Zion. We must not fail to do justice to the heroism of that little band, who chose, under the leadership of Zerubbabel, to leave their comfortable homes, their kith and kin, in Babylon, and to go forth into the waste howling wilderness¹ out of pure love of that holy city of Jerusalem, which

¹ For the dangerous character of the journey see Ezra viii. 21, 22.

few knew except by name and the reports of their fathers. On the part of each who went forth, it was an act of settled and deliberate choice. None were compelled to go. Many,—in all probability, most,—stayed behind. Those who went must have been tempted, again and again, by the hardships and dangers of the way, and by the uncertainty of the prospect, to return to their homes and kindred in Babylon. But still they pressed forwards. At last they reached the sacred stream, the Jordan. Then another weary march brought them to the Mount of Olives. A few steps further, and the site of the holy city was before them. They were, once more, at home.

Our Babylon, brethren, is that which the scriptures call “the world;” that “world,” whose contents, according to St. John, are “the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life;” that “world,” which, with its self-will and its addiction to the outward and the visible, haunts and infects our secret hearts. Redeemed by Christ,—having had the seal of our redemption printed upon us in our baptism,—we must, by our own will and choice and strenuous effort, go forth from this Babylon, and press onwards, through what may seem at times but a wilderness, towards our heavenly home. If we would be true to God

and his calling, the pilgrim life must be ours. But as we march forward day by day in obedience to the Divine call, the very desert, to use the prophet's language, will "rejoice and blossom as the rose." We shall come at last to Zion "with songs and everlasting joy upon our heads:" we shall "obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."¹ "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."²

Israel after the flesh is still an outcast amongst the nations; scattered far and wide over the whole face of the habitable globe; yet testifying, in its very ruin, to God's wondrous dealings with it in the past, and to an election whose duties and hopes are not yet exhausted. The name of Christian belongs but to a small proportion of the earth's millions of inhabitants. And, amongst those who "profess and call themselves Christians," not many seem to have their faces set steadfastly towards Zion, or to be living as those who are

¹ Isai. xxxv. 1—10; li. 11.

² Rev. vii. 16, 17.

indeed "pilgrims and strangers" upon earth. But it shall not always be so. Listen to what St. Paul says (Rom. xi. 25—32);—"I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, there shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." "If the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness." "If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead." "As ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief; even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all."

The more we dwell on these high thoughts, brethren, the more shall we be stirred up to set our faces Zionwards, and to live as those who do indeed seek that "city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." In all God's dealings with the nations around us,—with our

own country,—with our own souls,—we shall hear the cry addressed by the prophet of old to his fellow-exiles in Babylon, “Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing;” a cry which St. Paul translates into the language of Christian hope and fear, thus:—“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”¹

¹ 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18.

SERMON XII.

ST. PAUL AT ATHENS.

October 11th, 1863.

ACTS XVII. 32—34.

And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, we will hear thee again of this matter. So Paul departed from among them. Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

THIS is St. Luke's account of the effect of St. Paul's preaching at Athens. Some of his hearers turned his words into ridicule. Some said, "We will hear thee again of this matter." Some clave to him, and believed. Let us consider this morning what St. Paul had been saying, and why it was that his words had the effect which St. Luke describes.

St. Paul had now passed, in the prosecution of his missionary travels, from Asia into Europe. He had been "shamefully entreated," to use his own expression, at Philippi. He had been driven

by a riot, raised by the Jews, from Thessalonica. He had been compelled by the same Jews to quit Berea. And he had now come by sea to Athens. He is alone there. His friends and fellow-travelers,—Luke, Silas, Timotheus,—have been left behind; Luke at Philippi; Silas at Berea; Timothy, first at Thessalonica, then at Berea.

At Athens, while he is waiting for Silas and Timotheus, his spirit is stirred within him at the sight of the idolatry of the place. He disputes in the synagogue, sabbath after sabbath, with Jews and Proselytes, and in the market daily with those whom he happens to meet there.

Curiosity is roused by his discourses and discussions. His teaching is, at any rate, something *new*; and *that* is enough for an Athenian. He is asked by the philosophers themselves for an explanation of his views. On the hill of Mars,—the place where the highest Athenian Court of Justice had sate from time immemorial,—in sight of temples and altars and statues innumerable, he gives that explanation.

No passage in the history of Christianity is more full of interest than that which St. Luke here describes. Athens was then, and had for centuries been, the very centre of cultivated intellect,—the school and university of the ancient world. Since

the revival of learning in modern times it has almost regained its old proud pre-eminence. The poets and historians and philosophers of Athens are still *our* instructors. As we read their works, we wonder, again and again, at the wisdom and truth which they contain. We ask with some surprise, *whence*, without Christianity, they drew the light, which we cannot deny was theirs. The words which Paul spoke on Mars' hill to the degenerate successors of those great men, are an answer to our difficulty. There is One who is seeking us, long before we have learned to seek Him. All the goodness and truth that are in us, come from Him.

We have, I presume, in Luke's account, only a brief summary of St. Paul's discourse,—the principal heads of it, as it were. When Luke and Paul met again, wherever that was, or in that long imprisonment at Cesarea and at Rome, when Luke was Paul's companion, it would be natural for the Apostle to recount to his faithful friend the most moving incidents of his life; amongst which few could be more moving than the one which now occupies us. In those weary hours of enforced leisure he would tell, how he had come to the world-famous city; and how he had found it full of idols; and how he had argued with the philoso-

phers of the schools of Epicurus and Zeno; and how at last they had brought him to that hill on which the great court of Areopagus held its sittings, and had said to him,—“May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is? For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean.” And then would follow the account of the manner in which he had answered the inquiry, and of the effects which that answer had produced,—the mockery of some, the awakened interest of others, the adhesion and faith of a few.

We must remember that St. Paul was himself a man of great cultivation. In this address to an Athenian audience he quotes expressly from the work of a Greek poet. In one or two places in his epistles he does the same.¹ There are other passages in his writings, which, without being direct quotations, bear evident traces of an acquaintance with Greek authors.² This visit to Athens,—this conflict with the Athenian philosophers,—must have had a special interest for St. Paul. He must have asked himself, one thinks,—just as, at critical times in the changes and progress of thought, men have asked since,—“How is the gospel to conquer

¹ See 1 Cor. xv. 33; Tit. i. 12.

² See Gough's “New Testament Quotations,” pp. 297—299.

the intellect, as well as the affections,—the mind, as well as the heart?" That it must and would do so, he could not doubt. That reason and faith, the understanding and the soul, should be in a state of chronic opposition,—could never be a right, or sound, or healthful state of things. There must be an escape from such a conflict into a true, fundamental reconciliation. He himself could see plainly enough, in the light of the Spirit of truth, what that reconciliation was. The Gospel of Christ must in the end, not only conquer the heart and sanctify the affections, but also justify all that was true in the intellect, and give full play to the reason within its own proper sphere. St. Paul could foresee the triumph. He was also a chosen vessel in the hand of God for accomplishing it, not for his own time only, but for all times.

Standing, then, on the hill of Mars, under the open sky, in the midst of the space assigned to the court of the Areopagites,—full of all the thoughts inspired by the place and its associations,—St. Paul began to speak after this manner:—"Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious;" or, rather, "unusually religious," "remarkably scrupulous in matters of religion." "For as I passed by and beheld your devotions;" or, "For as I passed

along and examined the objects of your devotion ;”
“I found an altar with this inscription, ‘To the unknown God.’ Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.”

The courteous, conciliatory tone of these opening sentences of St. Paul’s address has often been noticed. It had been rumoured of him in the city, as we learn from the eighteenth verse, that he was “a setter forth of strange gods.” The greatest of Athenians had been condemned to death on a similar charge. It may possibly have been the remembrance of this, that made St. Paul unusually careful not to hinder the reception of the gospel by offending unnecessarily the religious scruples of his hearers. But quite apart from any such special motive, this courteous considerate tone was natural to St. Paul. Wherever he was ; whether he were addressing Jews or Gentiles, Greeks or barbarians, untutored heathens like those of Lystra, or a cultivated audience like this at Athens ; he ever strove to find a common ground, a ground common to himself and his hearers, upon which to stand, and from which to begin. In his Epistles we find the same characteristic mark ; the same desire to conciliate, the same dislike of giving offence, combined with perfect plainness and fearlessness of rebuke, where

rebuke was really needed. To praise was always delightful to him, where it could honestly be done. To blame was always disagreeable; though, when it became a duty, there was no slackness in the performance of it. This temper and tendency may have been partly due to natural constitution. But it was also perfectly in keeping with his deepest convictions. Believing, as he did, in Christ; believing in Him, as that Head of men who has an interest in all, and in whom all are brethren; he could not but speak and act most considerately, courteously, and respectfully towards all. The more the same faith gets dominion over us, the more will the same habitual courtesy and consideration become natural to us. It is want of faith in Christ that makes us rude and repellent, cold and domineering, one towards another.

After prefacing his address with these conciliatory words, and making the "altar to the unknown God" the text of his discourse, he went on thus:—"God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he giveth to all life and health and all things; and

hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: for in him we live and move and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch, then, as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art or man's device. And the times of this ignorance God overlooked; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent. Because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."

If the tone of the address is throughout courteous and conciliatory, it is at the same time thoroughly apostolical in its character; that is to say, it is an authoritative declaration of the truth. The words, "Whom ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you," are the keynote of the whole. St. Paul does not speak to them as one of their own philosophers might do,

matching argument with argument, subtlety with subtlety, one piece of sophistical reasoning with another piece of reasoning equally sophistical. Throughout, he speaks as a *witness*, affirming that which he knows, declaring that which he has seen. And the message of the Gospel must still be delivered in much the same tone, as that which carries its own credentials with it, and must be judged by the light which it is.

You will observe that there is but one passage in the whole address, which partakes at all of the nature of argument. From the fact that we are the children of God, St. Paul argues that we must not think so meanly of the Godhead as to suppose that it "is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device." For this would be to make the children nobler than their Father. But beyond this simple inference, everything is in the nature of direct authoritative statement,—an orderly exposition of Divine Truth. There is one God, the Creator, the Lord of heaven and earth, the Giver of life and health and all things, the Ruler of all the nations of the earth. He who is this, cannot be supposed to dwell in temples made with hands, or to stand in need of human ministries, as though there were something which He wanted done, and could not

do for Himself. He stands in no need of *us*: it is we who stand in need of Him. And He is stirring us up to feel this need. He would have us seek Him, feel after Him, find Him. Not that He is far from any one of us. For indeed in Him we live and move and have our being. We are his children, and He is our Father. But though not far from every one of us; though He is in us and we in Him; yet we do not see Him, and, not seeing Him, we forget Him. But He has not forgotten us. He has sent a message to us by One whom he has Himself chosen and ordained for the purpose. The times of past ignorance and carelessness He overlooks; but He now commands all men everywhere to repent. A day is coming, in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Messenger, who has brought us these authentic tidings concerning Him and his purposes. The resurrection of his Messenger from the dead is our warrant for believing this.

A Personal God, who creates, sustains, and orders all things; who cares for and governs his human creatures, and is to them as a Father, and who would have them know and rejoice in Him as such; who is a Judge too, as well as a Creator, a Ruler, a Father, and will certainly one day judge the world in righteousness by that risen

Man, to whom all judgment is committed;—*this* is the great subject of St. Paul's discourse. He offers no argument to prove the existence of such a Being. He works no miracle in attestation of the truth of his message. He simply delivers it, as a message. He knows it is true. He believes it himself. Why should not others believe it also?

I am anxious that we should dwell upon this point, because I think we shall find it helpful to our own faith. However it may have been in other places, in Athens certainly Paul worked no miracle. He appealed to no book, except the books of their own poets. He simply *preached the Gospel*; resting its claims to their acceptance merely on the ground of its own merits and the fact of the Resurrection of Jesus,—a fact, of the truth of which he could then and there cite no evidence but his own. In real truth, the message which he delivered, was compelled to be its own evidence. Transcending, as it did, all human experience; incapable, as it was, at the moment, of proof; could it be believed, or could it not?

St. Paul felt sure that it could and would be believed. And his confidence was not misplaced. There were those, who, at once, "clave to him and believed." The names of two,—names after-

wards, it would seem, well known in the Christian Church,—are recorded by St. Luke. There were others who were sufficiently interested and impressed to wish to hear more on the same subject from the same speaker. There were some, too, who mocked. The mention of a “resurrection” excited their ridicule. All that philosophy could say on such a subject as the immortality of the soul, had already been said by their own philosophers. What could “this babbler” add on a topic which their wisest sages had exhausted, yet without any satisfactory result? To mention it, and in terms so gross as actually to imply a bodily resurrection, was only to bring contempt upon himself and his doctrine.

What made the difference in the hearers on Mars’ Hill? Why did some believe, while others mocked? What makes the difference, brethren, in hearers *now*? Why do some embrace the Gospel thankfully and rejoicingly, while others pass it by with indifference, if not with contempt? We cannot answer with any certainty in any particular case. None can explore the mystery of the human heart, save He who made it, and who alone judgeth righteously. But there are some things which we know *must* stand in the way of the reception of the Gospel. Frivolity

is one; worldliness is another; wickedness is a third. Where these are;—where men are devoted to some sin which their conscience condemns; where they are content to live in the visible and the transient; where their thoughts are only light, and careless, and empty;—there the Word of God can take no permanent hold. In the language of scripture, it cannot *grow*. If it does not provoke scorn and ridicule, it will produce at most the half-roused apathetic answer,—“We will hear thee again of this matter.”

St. Paul's language was calculated to meet, here as always, the special needs and dangers of his hearers. Frivolous as they were, bent on novelties, sated and weary of life,—he spoke to them of the living God, of his mysterious nearness to every soul, of his tender care for all, of his righteous judgment. He did not indeed speak to them (as a modern preacher might probably have done) of their sins,—of the punishment due to sin,—of the one reconciliation for sin: for he knew that only in the knowledge of God could they learn to know themselves, and their own sins, and the demand of God's righteousness in relation to them. But he spoke to them just in that strain which was best adapted to rouse and solemnize their minds, and to bring them

out of their levity into serious reflection. God's presence, God's fatherliness, God's righteous judgment;—what thoughts could be more rousing, more solemn, and at the same time more comforting than these? Those who “clave to him and believed,” found it so. How different was his language from that of their philosophers! His words were not clever subtleties, but living words which went to their hearts. It was a message from that unseen world, whose existence they could neither forget nor deny. It was the very message they had been craving to hear. These countless idols and altars and temples,—these weary disputations of the philosophers,—what could *they* do for them? An hour's amusement, a brief oblivion of care, might be extracted out of them: but there was nothing to support under the blows of sickness and sorrow, pain and death, those great teachers of men,—nothing to fill the void, of which advancing years made them ever more sensible. The message brought by this unknown stranger could both support and satisfy. They asked no other ratification of its truth. They could not do otherwise than cleave to him and believe.

They were drawn simply by the power of the message itself. They believed it for its own sake,

because they could not help believing it. Happy are those even to this day, whose faith is of the same kind! Happy are those who "have not *seen*, and yet have believed!" Happy are those who can say in simplicity and sincerity of heart;—
"We believe this gospel message, because we have found it good and worthy of belief. We have found in it strength against temptation, patience under affliction, power to love God and to do his will, hope and comfort, joy and peace. Thought cannot conceive, fancy cannot paint, a higher, nobler, sweeter message than that of the Fatherly love of the righteous God, revealed for the salvation of men in Jesus the crucified and risen Son of God. In strong conviction,—with deliberate choice,—in calm, waiting dependence and leaning upon God,—we close with it. Our only grief is that we are so unworthy of it, and that it produces so little fruit in our own lives. We will pray and strive that our 'light may yet so shine before men, that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father which is in heaven.'"

CONCLUSION.

THE NATURE AND THE SPHERE OF LAW.

IN the preceding pages I have shown,—not, indeed, as I could wish to show it, but at least so as to make it apparent how thoroughly and conclusively it might be shown ;—first, that the evidence for the Christian religion rightly understood, irrespective of any theory as to the nature of the scriptures, is similar in kind and degree to the evidence for the surest generalizations of physical science ; and, secondly, that the more carefully the scriptures are studied, the more decisively do they exhibit special characteristics, which distinguish them from all other writings, and eminently qualify them to be the written record of a Revelation of God.

In the course of these pages, I have had frequent occasion to use the word “law.” Few words seem at the present day to stand in greater

need of accurate definition than this. It is impossible to do without it. To those who unite to their faith in the gospel of Christ a strong sense of the value of positive science, it is most interesting to consider how far that which is denoted by the word, extends. I can hardly bring myself to conclude, until I have endeavoured, first, to ascertain more precisely its *connotation*; and, secondly, to determine, if possible, its *sphere*.

1. The word is employed alike in mathematical and in physical science; in metaphysics; in jurisprudence; in theology, morals, and religion. Thus, in mathematics we speak of the "law" of a series; in physical science, of "laws" of nature; in metaphysics, of the "law" of causation, the "laws" of space and time; in jurisprudence, of statute "law," common "law," canon "law," civil "law;" in morals, of the "law" of conscience, the "law" of duty; and in theology and religion, we have such striking and remarkable language as this of St. Paul; "Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under law, but under grace:"¹—"The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."² A term of such wide extent, and capable of such varied applications,

¹ Rom. vi. 14.

² Rom. viii. 2.

must necessarily present great difficulties in the way of any attempt to fix its meaning. And yet, for that very reason, it becomes all the more necessary to endeavour to do so.

It cannot be doubted that the word belongs originally to jurisprudence, morals, and religion; and that its applications to physical, metaphysical, and mathematical science are of later and secondary usage. In this its proper and original sense, "law" is *θέμις, νόμος, lex, fas*,—that which is "set" or "assigned," "laid" or "uttered," as the guide and rule of human conduct, to which that conduct must, under penalties, conform. And herein is implied, at once, an *authority*, that can issue such rules and regulations, and to which submission is due.

The Hebrew language, as one would expect, is specially rich in words descriptive of this essential and original characteristic of law. The writer of the *cxixth* Psalm,—to go no further than that,—employs no less than eight words to describe the one perfect law of the righteous God. With him it is not only "law,"—that is, according to the original meaning of the Hebrew word, *teaching* or *instruction*; but also "testimonies," "precepts," "statutes," "commandments," "judgments," "ways" or "way," "words"

or "word." It bears "witness" to God's moral nature and character; it is "set over" man for his guidance; it is "fixed" and unalterable; it is the "appointment" of a superior for an inferior; it is the sentence of an "upright Judge," executing vengeance upon all deviations from it; it is the "way," in which man must walk, if it is to go well with him; it is the "word," which his Maker speaks to him.

Our first notion of law, then, drawn from the field of morals and religion, is that it is the utterance of the Divine or Supreme Will, to which the human or inferior will must submit, or it will be the worse for it; but which it can, and often does, resist. And this notion is confirmed by a consideration of the laws, by which states are governed, and the relations between their citizens fixed and regulated. The higher will, the will of the body or state, expresses itself in laws,—whatever form, whether of statute or custom or precedent, these may take, and through whatever agencies they may shape themselves;—and the inferior will, the will of the individual citizen, must obey, or suffer the penalties attached to disobedience.

The perfection of law, in this sense, consists in its justice and its universality. Human law is

good, in proportion as it embraces, justly and reasonably, all the cases of the kind contemplated by the framers of it: it is bad, in proportion as it commits injustice, or obliges exceptions. The laws of God, we believe, are altogether just and good and true; and human laws will be just and good and true also, in proportion as they study the Divine procedure, and copy and assimilate themselves to it:—even as, in the conduct of one's own individual life, the one needful thing is to discover what God's manner of dealing is, and to copy *that*,—thus working with Him, instead of fighting against Him. For the principle laid down by St. Paul,¹—“Be ye followers,” or, more exactly, “imitators,” “of God, as dear children,” admits of the widest application.

So far, we have found in “law,” a *rule*, applicable to an indefinite number of cases, proceeding from the will of a superior, and claiming obedience on the part of the inferior. But the rule can be broken; the higher will may be resisted, though at the peril of him who resists. The laws of God, when thus outraged and violated, do surely, though not always speedily, avenge themselves. They are “judgments,” as well as “statutes.” Human laws should do the same.

¹ Eph. v. 1.

The administration of justice is imperfect in a state, in so far as this is not the case.

We have next to consider what further elements, if any, are introduced into the idea of law, by the later and derived applications of the word to other subjects.

In mathematics, the "law" of an algebraical series is the principle of its formation; the rule, according to which each term of the series enters into it and takes its place in it. A certain number of terms of the series being given, the law of its formation can at once be discerned. In metaphysics, the laws of causation,¹ of space and time,

¹ On a preceding page (p. 140), where I have spoken of "the general Law of Causation," I have not used the expression, "Law of Causation," in the restricted sense in which Mr. Mill uses it (*System of Logic*, Book III. chap. v.), namely, as "the universal law of successive phenomena," or "the law that every consequent has an invariable antecedent;" but merely to describe the ineradicable conviction of the mind, that every effect must have had a sufficient cause. Carry up our notion of physical cause, as far back as we can; resolve the uniformities of nature into the most general expressions, of which they are susceptible;—there still remains a Cause beyond; a Mystery, unexplained; a Riddle, which physical science is confessedly powerless to solve.

"What is called explaining one law of nature by another," writes Mr. Mill (*System of Logic*, Book III. chap. xii. § 6), "is but substituting one mystery for another; and does nothing to render the general course of nature other than mysterious. We can no more assign a *why* for the more extensive laws than for the partial ones."

are forms or conditions to which thinking must submit. We cannot think any *thing*, except as in space and time; nor any *event*, except as in the relation of cause and effect. We believe that, mediately or immediately,¹ these conditions were imposed upon thought by Him who gave man his powers of perceiving and reasoning. They are a part of his general ordinances for man.

Again, in physical science, laws are, on the first view of the matter, the regularities or uniformities of nature,—constant relations of succession and coexistence, existing between phenomena,—the apparently invariable concomitance of physical antecedent and physical consequent. The external world by which we are surrounded, and to which to a certain extent we *belong*, goes obviously by fixed and steadfast rules. It is not a whirl of chance, but a world of order. "Thou hast given them a law," writes the Psalmist, contemplating this fact, "which cannot be broken."²

Mr. Mill draws a distinction between "laws" and "laws of nature," viewing the latter as the

¹ "Whether, as some hold, space and time are forms of thought; or whether, as I hold myself, they are forms of things, that have become forms of thought through organized and inherited experience of things;" &c., &c. Mr. Herbert Spencer's "Classification of the Sciences," p. 4.

² Psalm cxlviii. 6.

simplest expressions to which the uniformities of nature are reducible,—the ultimate facts into which those uniformities may be resolved,—the highest causative principles, which being given, the whole of nature follows as a necessary consequence.¹ In this view, that which once was considered a law of nature, may at any moment cease to be so. For example, Kepler's laws of planetary motion ceased to be laws of nature, as soon as Newton had explained them by the law of universal gravitation.²

¹ "It is the custom of philosophers, wherever they can trace regularity of any kind, to call the general proposition which expresses the nature of that regularity, a *law*; as when, in mathematics, we speak of the law of decrease of the successive terms of a converging series. But the expression, *law of nature*, is generally employed in science with a sort of tacit reference to the original sense of the word *law*, namely, the expression of the will of a superior; the superior, in this instance, being the Ruler of the universe. When, therefore, it appeared that any of the uniformities which were observed in nature, would result spontaneously from certain other uniformities, without any separate act of creative will, the former have not usually been spoken of as laws of nature."—*System of Logic*, Book III., chap. iv., sec. 1.

² "After this great discovery, Kepler's three propositions, though still called laws, would hardly, by any person accustomed to use language with precision, be termed laws of nature: that phrase would be reserved for the simpler laws into which Newton, as the expression is, resolved them."—*Ibid.*

In a preceding part of this volume¹ I have endeavoured to show that there is a difference between inferred *facts* and inferred *laws*,—between those inductive truths, which from their very nature are not susceptible of direct observation, and those, which, only from circumstance and accident as it were, are in the same predicament. Practically, I fancy, the two definitions will tend to coincide. Laws, whether described as laws of nature or simply as general laws, will, in either view, be the highest generalizations, the simplest expressions, of the uniformities existing in nature. The element of causation will be inherent in them. But this will be the case, not merely from the fact that no higher generalizations have yet been made, which might at any moment dethrone them from their pre-eminence; but because their own nature is such as to fit them to be the necessary and the ultimate link between the material world and the throne of Him “who dwelleth in the light that no man can approach unto.”

In this secondary and derived field of the use of the term “law,” the thought of a higher, ruling Will,—in short, of a Lawgiver,—is still included. We cannot rid ourselves of it. We may tempo-

¹ Preface to the Second Edition.

rarily suppress or ignore it. We may refuse, and perhaps be right in refusing, to allow it a place in the actual processes and reasonings of science.¹ But we cannot destroy it. As soon as we pass from physics to metaphysics, from things to thoughts, the great First Cause, from whom all law and order proceed, becomes an imperious necessity, and the supreme law of our mental constitution. These very laws of nature are themselves under law. The phrase, "law of gravitation," describes an active force or principle, which is at once regular and regulative; itself governed, yet governing other things; proceeding according to a definite measure or scale itself, while it compels obedience to its dictates in the things over which it is set. In this region, there is no such thing as disobedience to law. The operation of any law may be overlaid and concealed by counter-acting agencies; but, however disguised, it is still operating and with its full effect.

The idea of "law," then, seems to involve the notion of *authority*, expressing itself in *rules*, to which, in the case of the involuntary creation, *obedience* must be, and always is, paid; but

¹ See, for example, the controversy upon the Doctrine of Final Causes in Physiology.—Hist. of the Ind. Sci., Book xvii. chap. viii.

which, in the case of the voluntary creation, is sometimes resisted ;—resisted, with sure retribution under the Divine legislation,—with retribution not so sure, yet ever striving to make itself more sure, under human legislation. A higher *will*, uttering itself in *rules*, and requiring *obedience* to those rules ;—such, so far as I can see, is the original connotation of the word. Popular use, however, even amongst philosophers, as is so often the case, has rounded off the edges of this connotation, and suppressed much of its contents ; so that mere regularities, of any kind or however superficial, are frequently described as “ laws ;” and hence the application of the word to the formation of an algebraical series, or to the first rough tracings of the uniformities of nature.¹

2. We have to ask, further, what the *sphere* of law is ; how far it extends ; whether any,—and, if any, what,—part of creation is not subjected to it.

That the dominion of law extends over the

¹ See, for example, Hist. of the Ind. Sci., Book XVIII., chap. iv. Dr. Whewell carefully distinguishes the *laws* of phenomena from the *causes* of phenomena (Phil. of the Ind. Sci., Book XI., chap. vii.) ; thus, apparently, restricting the use of the word “ law” to the lower empirical uniformities of nature. Curiously enough, this use of the word just suppresses the essential part of the original connotation, and leaves the non-essential part. It suppresses the *ruling principle*, and leaves only an *outward regularity*.

whole area of the physical world, there can, I think, be no doubt. It is ever the tendency of science to show, that all phenomena, even those which seem most variable, uncertain, and capricious, are really subject to law. In a climate like ours, the phenomena of wind and rain, heat and drought, stand as the very type of everything that is fickle and irregular and inconstant. Yet even these are being increasingly shown to be reducible to rule; so that the columns of our newspapers can predict, day by day, on known and rational principles, the weather which may reasonably be anticipated.

In saying this, I am fully prepared to recognise in miracles an exception to the rule. While we admit the fact, that our ordinary experience of nature teaches us to extend the sphere of law over the whole area of the physical world, and that in all our investigations of that physical world we must proceed on the assumption that so it is, it must yet be thoroughly understood that there is no necessity, either in the constitution of nature or of our own minds, for its being so. The axiom, that every physical phenomenon has its invariable *physical* antecedent or antecedents, is merely a wide generalization,—an induction by simple enumeration,¹—to which at any moment

¹ System of Logic, Book III., chap. xxi. § 1.

an exception might start up.¹ So long as our investigation of nature brings us to ultimate laws, of which physical science can offer no explanation; so long as we are compelled to confess that those laws must always be *plural*, and can never be reduced to any one single law;² so long, too, as the original "collocations of the permanent causes"³ baffle all our attempts to analyse and systematize them;—*so long*, reason itself compels us to fall back upon a first cause, different in kind from these ultimate causative laws,—an Author of Nature, who holds all its phenomena and their laws in the hollow of his hand.⁴ And, so long as

¹ "The law of cause and effect," writes Mr. Mill, "is therefore, not without reason, placed, in point of certainty, at the head of all our inductions; on a level with the first principles of mathematics which rest, as we shall see presently, upon much the same species of induction as itself."—*System of Logic*, Book III. chap. xxi. § 5.

With all respect for Mr. Mill, I cannot think that he has proved this absolute certainty of the law of causation; understanding the law in the restricted sense, in which he understands it. The whole chapter, however, on the subject of "the evidence of the law of universal causation" is most interesting and valuable.

² *System of Logic*, Book III. chap. xiv. § 1, 2.

³ *Ibid.* chap. xvi. § 3.

⁴ Physical science, could it attain to its conceivable ideal of perfection, would connect all outward phenomena into uniformities, and resolve all these uniformities into a certain number of general laws, from which all the subordinate uni-

this is the case, the absolute denial of miracles is unreasonable and unphilosophical; their occur-

formities might be deduced. But, so far as physical science is concerned, these general laws themselves remain a *mystery*, in presence of which two alternatives are open to us; *either* the blankest atheism and scepticism, *or* the belief in a Personal Creator. Accepting this latter alternative, as being, on innumerable accounts, the more reasonable of the two, we ask further,—In what relation does the Creator stand to his creation? Did He set it going millions of years ago, and then leave it to itself and the operation of laws once for all impressed upon it? Or does He still act upon it, and at every moment sustain and govern it?

It is not the business of physical science to answer this second question, any more than the first. But from physical science we gather this much of help towards answering it. It is impossible, merely by the aid of natural laws and forces, to deduce creation as it *is* from creation as, on the most probable hypothesis, it at the first *was*. Science by itself cannot effect an unbroken passage, without the intervention of fresh creative impulses, from the original nebulous mass to the present hierarchy of created beings; from the inorganic world to the organic; from the lower animals to man. The geological evidence points distinctly *away from* the theory of the transmutation of the ape into the man; and the theory is compelled to attempt to save itself by expedients, which have no footing in the actual evidence.

“The two skulls,”—the Engis and the Neanderthal,—“have given rise to nearly an equal amount of surprise for opposite reasons; that of Engis because being so unequivocally ancient, it approached so near to the highest or Caucasian type; that of the Neanderthal, because, having no such decided claims to antiquity, it departs so widely from the normal standard of humanity.” Lyell’s *Antiquity of Man*, p. 89.

The voice of science, therefore, so far as it can have any voice in the matter, is, on the present evidence, *against* the notion that the Creator left creation to itself, after the first creative act.

rence, at least, a possible contingency; their acceptance, under certain conditions, altogether consistent with the proved necessities of the case.

For all practical purposes, however, we may consider the physical world around us, as absolutely within the sphere of law. But the question then arises,—What is man's place in that physical world, and what is his relation to the laws by which it is governed?

Were man only a physical or material being,—a being of a bodily organization, like the dumb animals around him, and nothing more,—it is clear that he would be as much subject to purely physical or natural laws,—mechanical, chemical, vital,—as they are. But it becomes a question, whether the higher nature, moral and spiritual, of which he is a partaker, may not modify that dominion of physical law, to which, as a being of flesh and blood, he would otherwise be purely subject; and whether that higher nature, which is certainly his, be itself subject to law, or no.

There is nothing, I imagine, which the spirit of man so chafes and rebels against, as the notion of being, at every point and pore, under the inexorable dominion of laws. The sense of freedom perishes with the conviction that we are wholly and altogether under the iron yoke and the

absolute necessities of law ; that, at every moment, the present is irrevocably determined by the past, and the future by the present ; that what we have been, makes us what we are,—and what we are, what we shall be. We want to be assured that God deals with us directly and personally,—not *always* through the mediation of law, but by his own Spirit, communing immediately with our spirits, and through the workings of a Providence, which takes each case, specially and one by one, into careful consideration, and treats it according to its peculiar needs and requirements.

Just as the phenomena of chemistry cannot be explained by mechanical laws ; nor the phenomena of physiology, by chemical laws ; nor the phenomena of society, by biological laws ;—so, the experiences of the spiritual life in man cannot be explained by any of these laws, nor by all of them combined. We are, here, in a region, in which the soul of man claims to be in direct contact with its Maker, without any intervening medium whatever. The conviction of sin, the sense of forgiveness, the consciousness of a lusting of the spirit against the flesh as well as of the flesh against the spirit,¹ the assurance of peace and freedom and joy in God,—experiences, which

¹ Gal. v. 17.

are as real to many minds as the very air they breathe,—belong to a sphere with which physical law has nothing to do, and which it is powerless to explain. Yet, at the same time, these experiences of the soul and conscience are sensations of a spiritual being, who is clothed in a “muddy vesture of decay,” which is the natural subject of physical law. And hence arises a complicated interaction of diverse and often contending principles, like the conflict of opposite tides in some narrow sea, which it is impossible to analyse or define.

So much must be said, and so much is all that need now be said, as to the relation of the complex being, called *man*, to physical law. Into the question of the relation of the spirit of man to the laws imposed upon his intellectual constitution, and the possibility of surmounting those laws, we need hardly enter. The case is obviously too exceptional to require to be practically considered. Those who believe that the apostles of Christ were honest, sober men, neither deceivers nor deceived, will recognize, in a few of their recorded experiences,¹ something, which such terms as mysticism, enthusiasm, fanaticism, will not go far to explain. It remains only to consider the relation of man to the moral law.

¹ 2 Cor. xii. 2—4. Rev. i. 10; iv. 1, 2.

St. Paul says, in words already referred to;—
“Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under law, but under grace.” To him it was one great,—nay, almost the greatest,—part of the blessedness of the gospel, that it set him free from the binding, killing feeling of being wholly under law, and made him understand that God was freely and graciously seeking him, and that he might seek and find God. The conviction, in which psalmists and prophets of old had delighted, that the law was the gracious word of the living God to his creatures, had, under the teaching of the Scribes and Pharisees, almost perished from the Jewish Church in St. Paul’s day. He saw, indeed, that it was “holy, just, and good.”¹ He fully admitted its surpassing excellence. His life as a moral being, his thoughts and words and actions, *ought*, he confessed, to be brought into obedience to it. But he was powerless to obey it, so long as it stood before him as a master and a mediator, cutting him off from all direct and immediate access to the God and Father of his spirit. It became to him “the strength of sin,”²—a “ministry of condemnation and death.”³

¹ Rom. vii. 12.

² 1 Cor. xv. 56.

³ 2 Cor. iii. 9; Rom. vii. 9—11.

In a moment never to be forgotten, the light of heaven flashed upon him, and he found himself in a world in which all things were new. A Divine Guide, Teacher, and Lord was calling him by name,¹ and claiming him as a free servant, who might be something to his Master, even as his Master might be everything to him. Then he understood that, in his inmost soul and spirit, in the centre and sanctuary of his being, he was "not under law, but under grace." "The Spirit of life in Christ Jesus," working in him not fitfully or capriciously, but regularly and steadfastly, and in this sense a *law*,—"the *law* of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus,"² was daily setting him free from that "law of sin and death," of whose bitter bondage he had had such painful experience.

St. Paul's experience is a thoroughly human experience; though, in his case, it was limited to a sense of the exceeding contrast between the moral and ceremonial law on the one side, and the grace of the gospel of God on the other. His language is for us, as well as for himself; but in a wider sense than he intended. There is a region, in which we are "not under law," but, directly and immediately, under God. But this fact,—as it does not take us from under the con-

¹ Acts ix. 4.

² Rom. viii. 2.

trol of the laws of the state, to which as citizens we belong, so neither does it take us from under the control of that moral law, which God promulgated once for all, amidst the lightnings and thunderings of Sinai, for his human creation. On the contrary, the direct access of the soul to the Father, which the gospel proclaims, is, amongst many other blessed fruits, to produce *this*,—"That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."¹

¹ Rom. viii. 4.—Luther, in his Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians, has some very striking remarks on this subject. Thus, on Gal. ii. 19, he writes:—"It is necessary that men's consciences should be diligently instructed, that they may well understand the difference between the righteousness of the law, and grace. The righteousness of grace or the liberty of conscience doth in no wise pertain to the flesh. For the flesh may not be at liberty, but must remain in the grave: it must be in subjection to the law, and exercised by the Egyptians. But the Christian conscience must be dead to the law, that is to say, free from the law, and must have nothing at all to do with it. It is good to know this; for it helpeth very much for the comforting of poor afflicted consciences. Wherefore, when you see a man terrified and cast down with the sense and feeling of his sin, say unto him:—Brother, thou dost not rightly distinguish. Thou placest the law in thy conscience, which should be placed in the flesh. Awake, arise up, and remember that thou must believe in Christ the conqueror of the law and sin. With this faith thou shalt mount up above and beyond the law, into that heaven of grace where is no law nor sin. And albeit the law and sin do still remain, yet they pertain nothing to thee: for thou art dead to the law and sin."

That this should be so, need not seem at all surprising. The gospel of a suffering Saviour is the Divine method of regenerating the human will.¹ It proceeds according to the regular principles of human nature; assails the will in its fountain-head; brings the noblest and the purest and the most powerful motives to bear upon it,—love and gratitude, confidence and hope, freedom and joy. The “corn of wheat” must “fall into the ground and die;” and, through dying, “bring forth much fruit.”²

We may bring our present inquiry to a conclusion by the following general statement.

The curious and subtle complexity of man's nature, whereby he has direct spiritual access to the Father,—being, in this highest region, “not under law, but under grace;” and yet, as a moral being, is “not without law to God, but under the law to Christ;”³ and, at the same time, is a physical being,—a being of flesh and blood,—subject to the operation of those natural laws,

¹ James i. 18. 1 Pet. i. 23.—The question, how far the human will is actuated by motives, and how far it has a free determining power of its own,—seems to me to raise a wrong and comparatively unimportant issue. The real question is,—Does God leave us entirely to the operation of laws, or does He also act directly upon our spirits, to enlighten and regenerate them?

² John xii. 24.

³ 1 Cor. ix. 21.

under which all beings of a similar, though lower type of, organization come,—renders it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to decide how far that dominion of physical law, to which, if it were not for his higher nature, man would be subject, becomes modified by that higher nature, according to which he is made in the image of God, and made to know and love and serve God. There is a well-known dominion of mind and spirit over matter; as well as of matter over spirit and mind. The weary spirit can even make the body the prey of disease; just as the soul that is at peace with God can infuse fresh life and vigour into the languid and depressed powers of the body. We need not be careful to define the reciprocal influence of the principles of grace and law, freedom and necessity. It is enough for us to recognize that both are present.¹

St. Paul's ministry was one long struggle against the bondage of law,—one long testimony to the gospel of the grace and the kingdom of God.² He knew nothing about "laws of nature," in the sense in which modern philosophers use the term. But were he amongst us now, he

¹ See Campbell's *Thoughts on Revelation*, Part II. § ii. pp. 80—86.

² Acts xx. 24, 25.

would lift his voice, I cannot but think, to protest against that bondage and tyranny of law, which the scribes of modern science would sometimes impose upon us. He would still detect in this pure bondage of law, of whatever kind, "the strength of sin." He would still affirm that law, of every kind, in its direct bearings upon human life and character, is a "schoolmaster to bring us to Christ."¹ He would still see in the gospel of freedom the possibility of deliverance "from the body of this death."² He would still say:—"Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under law, but under grace."

¹ Gal. iii. 24.

² Rom. vii. 24.

THE END.

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